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The Adams Mansion

THE HOME OF

JOHN ADAMS AND JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

By Henry Adams, 2d

The Adams Mansion in 1934

135 ADAMS STREET, QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS

QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS

Printed for the Adams Memorial Society

1935

THE ADAMS MANSION

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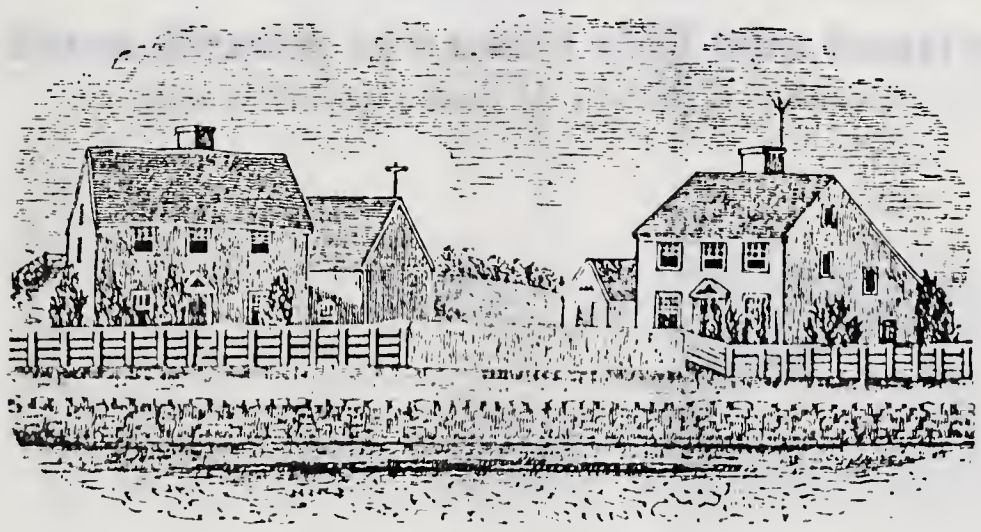


The Adams Birthplaces in Quincy

FROM A WOODCUT MADE IN 1838

Printed for the Adams Memorial Society

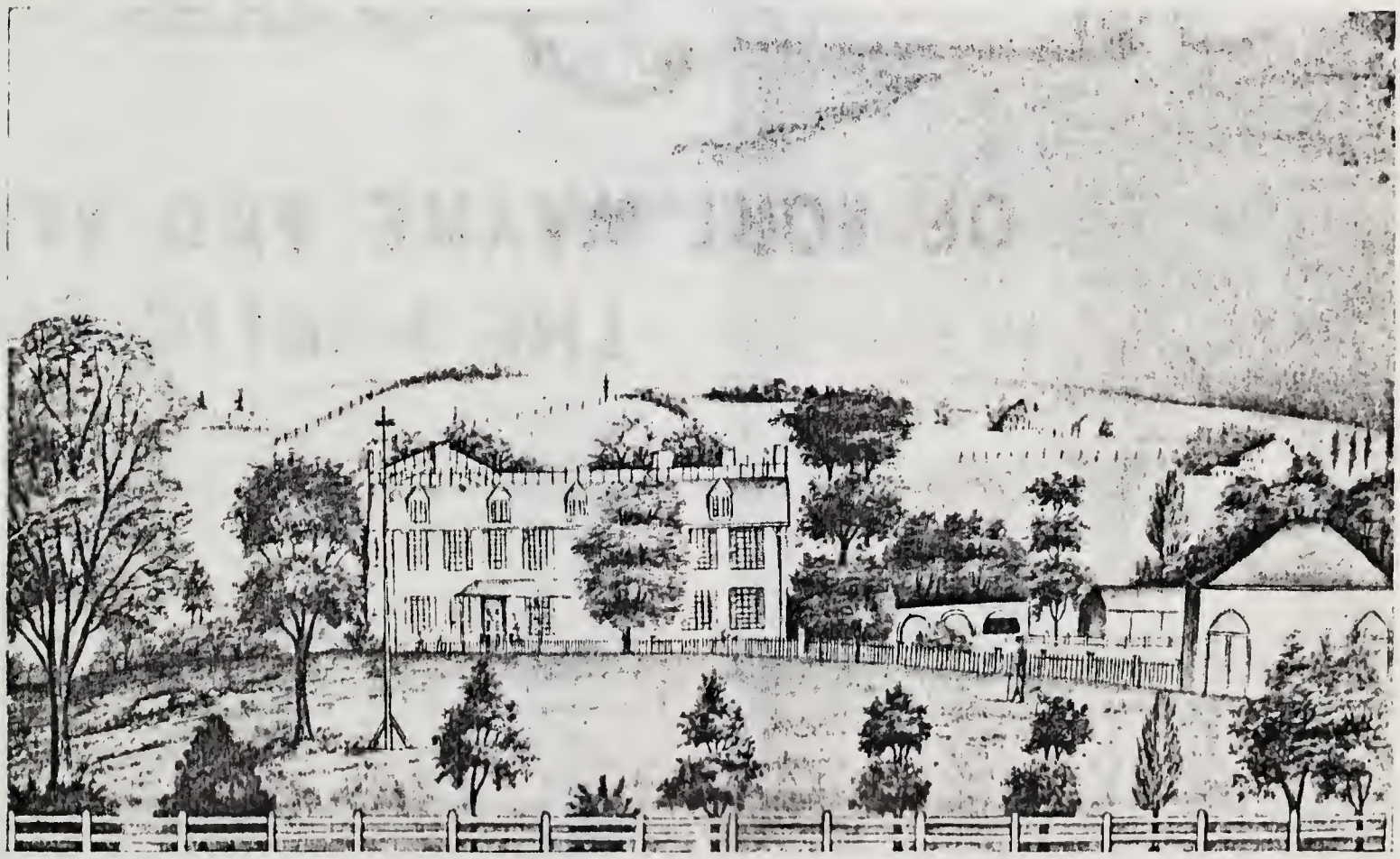
QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS

1935

Rec'd June 20, 1977

Adams Mansion as it was in 1787 when bought by John Adams

FROM A DRAWING MADE IN 1798 BY E. MALCOLM OF NEW YORK



Adams Mansion as in 1822

FROM A SKETCH BY MISS SARAH APTHORP

Twenty-five Hundred Copies
Reprinted, with Additions, from
Old-Time New England
the Bulletin of
The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
for
The Adams Memorial Society
Owners of
The Adams Mansion

SECOND EDITION

Preface

THIS brief history of the Adams Mansion, or "Old House" as the family always called it, first appeared in the July 1928 number of "Old-Time New England"—the Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. As twenty-five hundred copies reprinted for the Trustees of the Adams Mansion have proved of such interest that many visiting the Mansion for the first time brought copies with them, it was advised that the next issue be amplified. Consequently this issue, printed for the 200th anniversary of the birth of John Adams, is more than double the size of the first, and could, with the information in the Adams family files, be enlarged many times. The Trustees hope that through it the interest in the home of John Adams may continue to increase.

To the visitor, especially if a connoisseur, the interior may seem incongruous — unsightly furniture, pendants and glass door-knobs of the Victorian period being found together with Louis Seize chairs, Sevres china, and brass latches and locks of Revolutionary times. Although with the material at its disposal the Society might have made the Old House over into a pleasing example of an early American dwelling, this would not have been advisable, for, being the history of four generations of a family each of which wrote its part by leaving something, the Old House should not be typical of any one person or period. What each generation left may look odd now but it was thought beautiful then. Everything, therefore, has been allowed to remain where it was left, the only changes made being to replace where they had been when in use a few obsolete pieces of furniture, like the cradle, that were stored away. The interest of the Adams Mansion lies not in its beauty, but in its history and ownership.

The Adams Mansion

The Home of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams

By Henry Adams, 2d

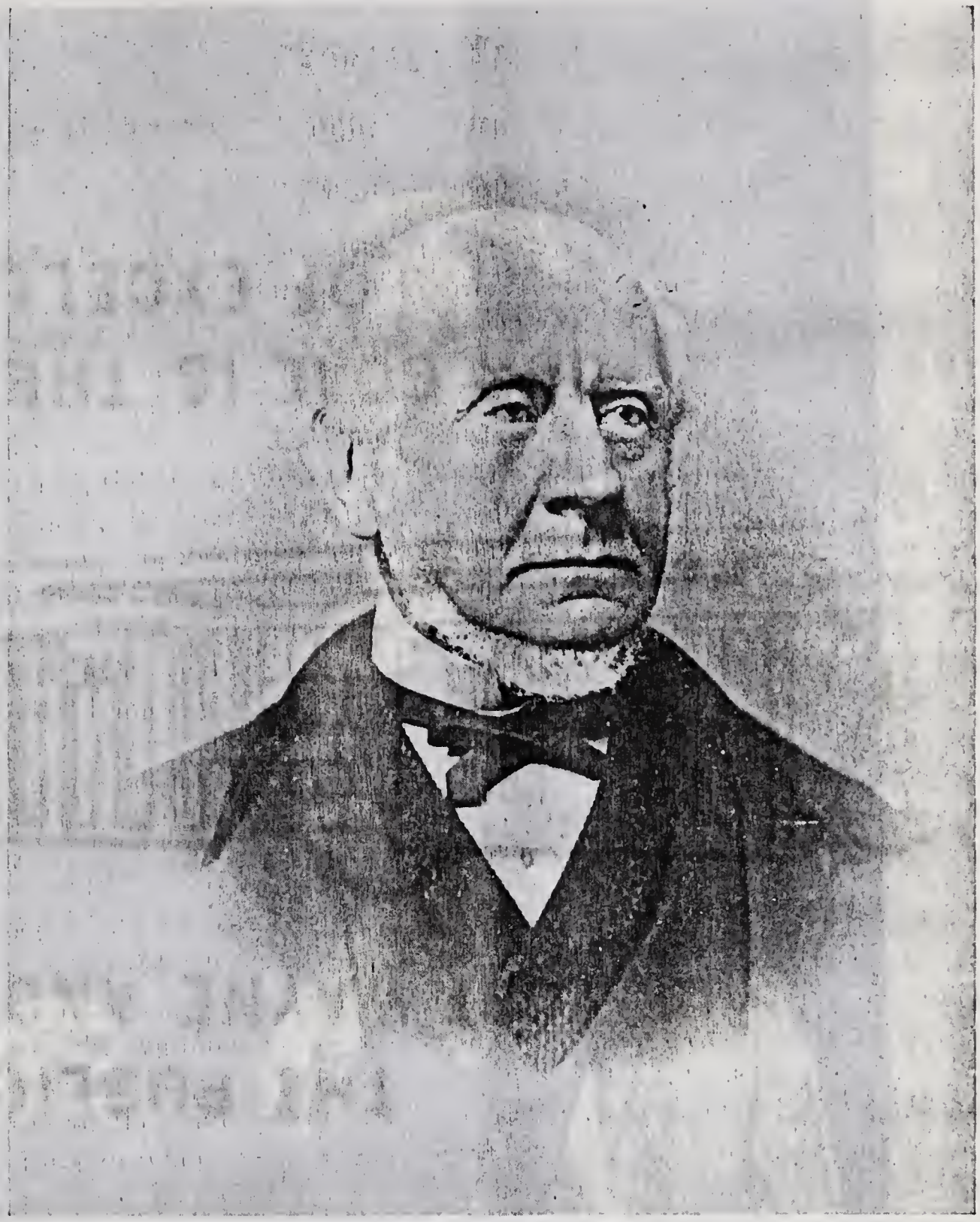
THE HOUSE in Quincy, once the home of John Adams, John Quincy Adams and Charles Francis Adams, in 1927 was placed in charge of trustees to be maintained as a family memorial. On the death of Brooks Adams in February, 1927, the last of the family to occupy the house, the rest of the family decided to form a corporation to take over the "Old House," as it was always called, and maintain it as a memorial like Mount Vernon, Monticello, the Hermitage and other homes of men whose names are part of the nation's history—but keeping as far as possible the personal contents untouched, as though the family were still there.

Adams Memorial Society

This house has unusual associations, more so than any other, given it by its occupation from the winning of our independence down to the present day by four generations of the same family, father and son, three of whom attained national fame.

Of these the first was John Adams, who, before the Revolution when he was a young lawyer, although taking an active part in the growing revolt and later to be one of those that signed the Declaration of Independence, yet had the courage to appear for the defence in the trial of the British soldiers for their part in the Boston Massacre; when the war broke out, through his earnest support George Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the American Continental Army; at the close of the war, John Adams was one of the Peace Commission at Paris that negotiated the terms of our independence; shortly after, he was appointed our first Minister to England at the Court of St. James's. At the end of his term as minister, while yet in London, he arranged for the purchase of his future home in Quincy, then part of Braintree, later naming it Peacefield in memory of the treaty of peace he had helped negotiate. He expected to come home and live in retirement on his farm; but being elected Vice-President for Washington's two terms from 1789 to 1797, and President from 1797 to 1801, he was able to spend only the summers in Quincy. From the end of his presidential term till his death in 1826 he lived here the year round, winter and summer, the only one of the family that ever did so. It was from this house he was driven to Philadelphia to be inaugurated the second President. In this house he died.

On the death of John Adams the Old House and farm passed to his son John Quincy—in the middle of his term as the sixth President. When his presidential term ended in 1829, he came to the Old House to live as his father had before him, but, unlike his father, he had no idea of retirement. Soon elected to Congress from the Plymouth District, his fiery oratory and bitter attacks on slavery made him a storm centre in the House, and won for him greater fame and following than had ever been his as



Charles Francis Adams

1807-1886

MINISTER TO GREAT BRITAIN. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH MADE IN 1869

Mrs. Charles Francis Adams

1808-1889

WIFE OF THE MINISTER TO GREAT BRITAIN
FROM A PORTRAIT PAINTED BY WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT ABOUT 1868

President. He fell at his work, stricken at his desk in Congress on the 21st of February, 1848, and died two days later.

From John Quincy Adams the Old House and farm passed to his son Charles Francis, Minister to England during the Civil War, whose note to Lord John Russell—"It would be superfluous in me to point out to your Lordship that this is war"—has never been forgotten. This note was sent at the end of a controversy known as the "Battle of the Rams." In 1863 the Lairds of Liverpool were completing in their yards at Birkenhead, two iron-clads for the Confederacy. These vessels, had they got to sea, might have greatly prolonged the war by raising the blockade with which the North was slowly but surely exhausting the South. Exerting every effort to prevent this, Minister Adams produced such proofs of their destination and brought such pressure to bear, that on September 3rd Lord Russell was forced to forbid their sailing—but he sent no notice of his decision and action to the American Minister. A few days before, on September 1st, he had written Minister Adams that he could not interfere with the ships. To this note Minister Adams replied on September 5th with his "declaration of war" which has since become so famous—but, although he did not know it, he had already won the battle. In 1868, the Civil War being ended, Charles Francis Adams returned for a short time to his home in Quincy. In 1870 he was appointed one of the arbitrators that passed upon the Alabama Claims at Geneva. His success in obtaining before this Tribunal an award in favor of his country was his last act in public life. From Geneva he came home to live in retirement, spending his remaining summers in Quincy.

The last of the family to live in the Old House were Charles Francis Adams's two sons, Henry and Brooks. Henry Adams lived in the Old House during the summers of 1887, '88, and '89, while writing his "History of the United States from 1801 to 1817." Although this history was the most difficult of his many works, he is remembered by his better known autobiography, "The Education of Henry Adams." After him Brooks Adams used the place as his summer home till his death. Brooks wrote many treatises on the economic development of civilization. His favorite study was attempting to forecast the future of civilization, basing his reasoning on the working of the well-known law of history, that the development of civilization follows the exchanges. Many of his publications on this subject have been widely read, and one, "The Law of Civilization and Decay," translated and published in other countries than his own. On the death of Brooks Adams, on February 13, 1927, the century and a half of family occupation of the Old House came to its close. Such are the associations that have caused the rest of the family to keep the old mansion unchanged, a memorial to those that have lived in it.

Although the Old House is mainly associated with the Adams family, its first owner was Major Leonard Vassall, a Tory, or Loyalist as he would prefer being called, who bought the land on which the house stands in 1730 and built the house the next year. Major Vassall, a wealthy merchant owning extensive sugar plantations in the West Indies, had come to Boston in 1723. His home there was a large house on what is now Summer Street, where the C. F. Hovey Company store is today. As in those days it was the custom of wealthy men of Boston

to have farms in the country where they could spend the summers, that was probably the reason why Leonard Vassall built this place in Quincy—or Braintree as it was then, for Quincy was not set off till 1792. As he built it the house was small, it has been enlarged since, and comprised only the following rooms: On the ground floor the Panelled Room, West Entry, and Dining Room; on the second floor the West Bedroom and Guest Room; and in the attic three smaller rooms. As in the tropics, the meals were brought from a smaller house in the rear that contained the kitchen, and quarters for the negro slaves the Vassalls had for servants. The part of the house Leonard Vassall built was well constructed—the staircase is as firm today as when he built it, and neither floors nor sills show any sign of sagging. Since the two gable ends, of brick on solid foundations, had no windows, and the house was dark like all tropical houses, John Adams cut the windows that now overlook the garden. Then, and for many years after, the Panelled Room was used as a combined dining and living room, and the present Dining Room as a formal parlor.

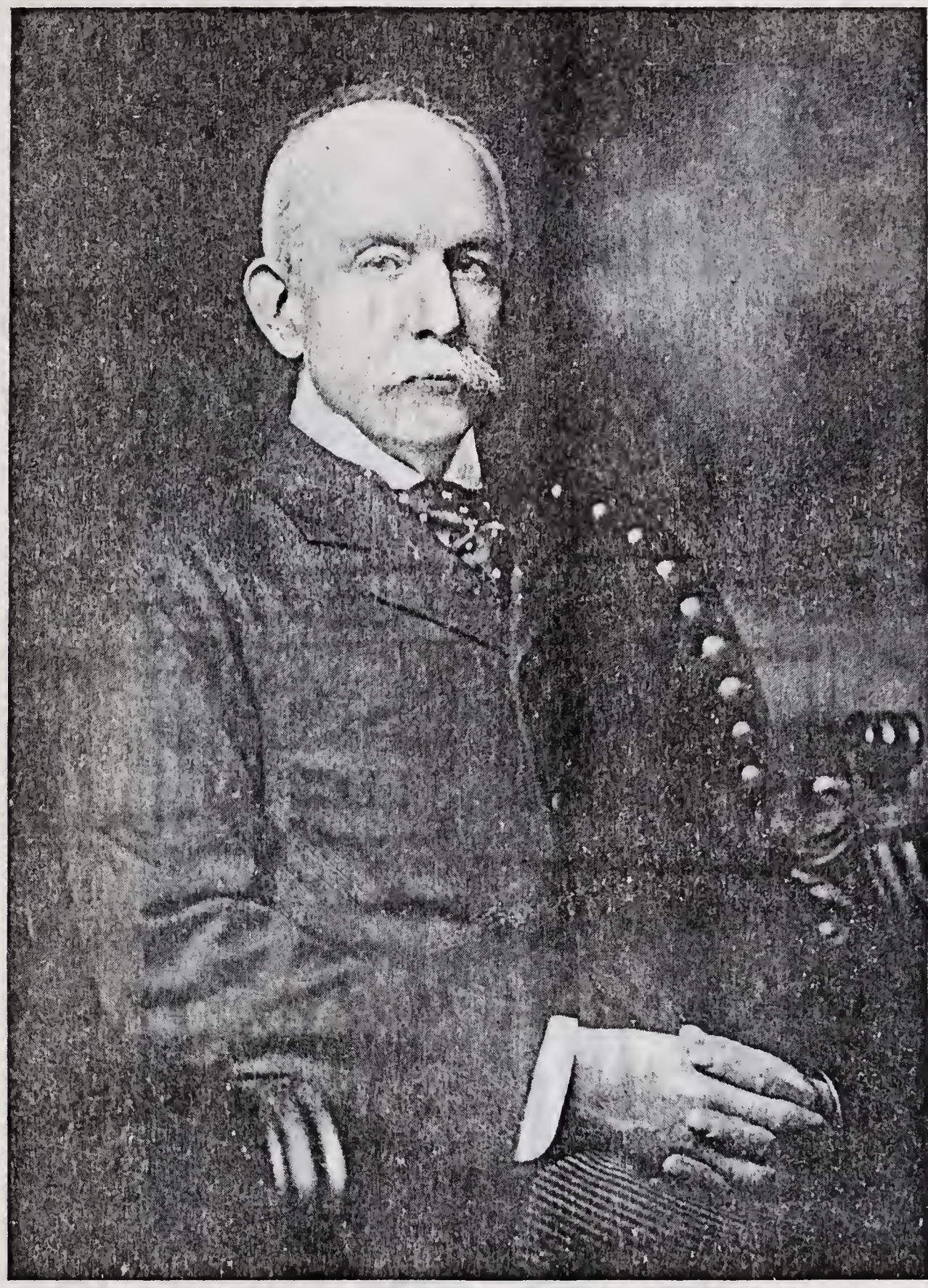
Leonard Vassall died in 1737. By the terms of his will his big house in Boston was sold and his other property, except the Braintree house and farm, distributed among his children. The Braintree house and farm he left to his widow, Phebe, for her use during her lifetime provided she would let his unmarried daughters by a former wife live with her there till they married or came of age. He made further restriction, however, that should his widow marry again or cease to be a professed member of the Church of England this property should then be held in trust for their three-year-old daughter, Anna, till she married or came of age. In 1738, less than a year after Leonard Vassall's death, his widow married Dr. Thomas Greaves of Charlestown, so the property then passed to their daughter. After her marriage Leonard Vassall's widow went to Charlestown to live, taking her daughter with her, and in 1750 there is recorded in the annals of Christ Church, Charlestown, the marriage of Anna Vassall to John Borland of Boston. Who lived in the "Old House" during this interim is not known, probably some of Leonard Vassall's other daughters, but at some time after their marriage the Borlands returned to Braintree, and identified themselves with town activities. It is recorded in the Braintree records that John Borland was elected constable in 1756 and 1757. How much of their time the Borlands spent in Braintree can only be surmised. Being wealthy Tories, with a house in Boston, they probably used the Old House as a country place, driving as they pleased from their house in town as Leonard Vassall had before them. The Borlands were contemporaries of John and Abigail Adams. John Adams and Anna Vassall were the same age, both born in 1735. As in letters and diaries there are several references to having tea at the Borlands', it is evident that John and Abigail Adams were familiar with the interior of the Old House before they bought it. In 1768, the Borlands, finding the Old House too small for their increasing household and wishing to be near others of the Vassall family, bought the big Apthorp house in Cambridge—now by strange coincidence part of Adams House of Harvard College. The Cambridge of that day was a hot-bed of Tories. Their houses, with elaborate gardens extending to the Charles River, stretched along Brattle Street, known as Tory Row. Among

Mrs. Brooks Adams

(Evelyn Davis)

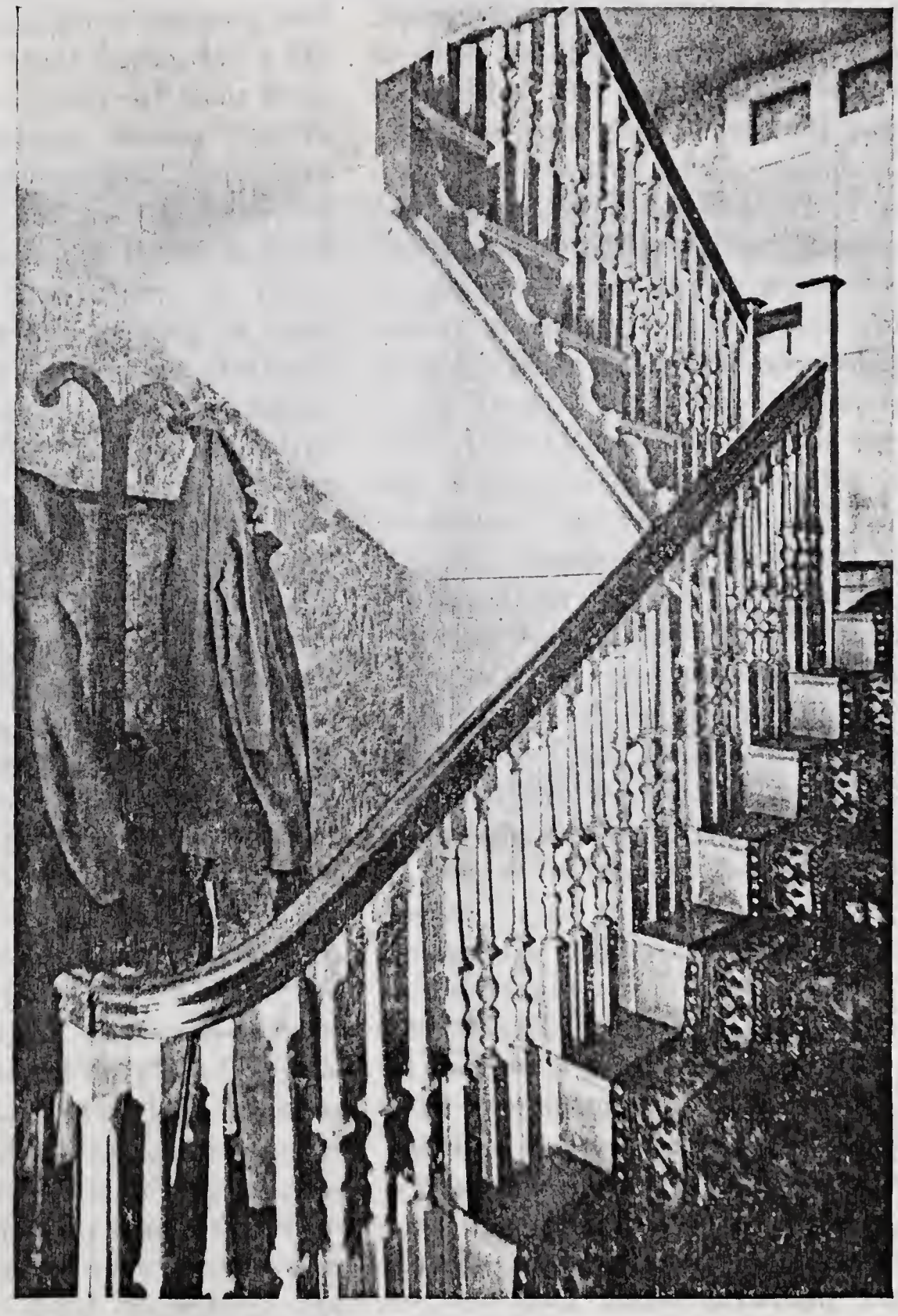
1853-1926

AGE FORTY-THREE YEARS



Brooks Adams
1848-1927

AGE SIXTY-TWO YEARS

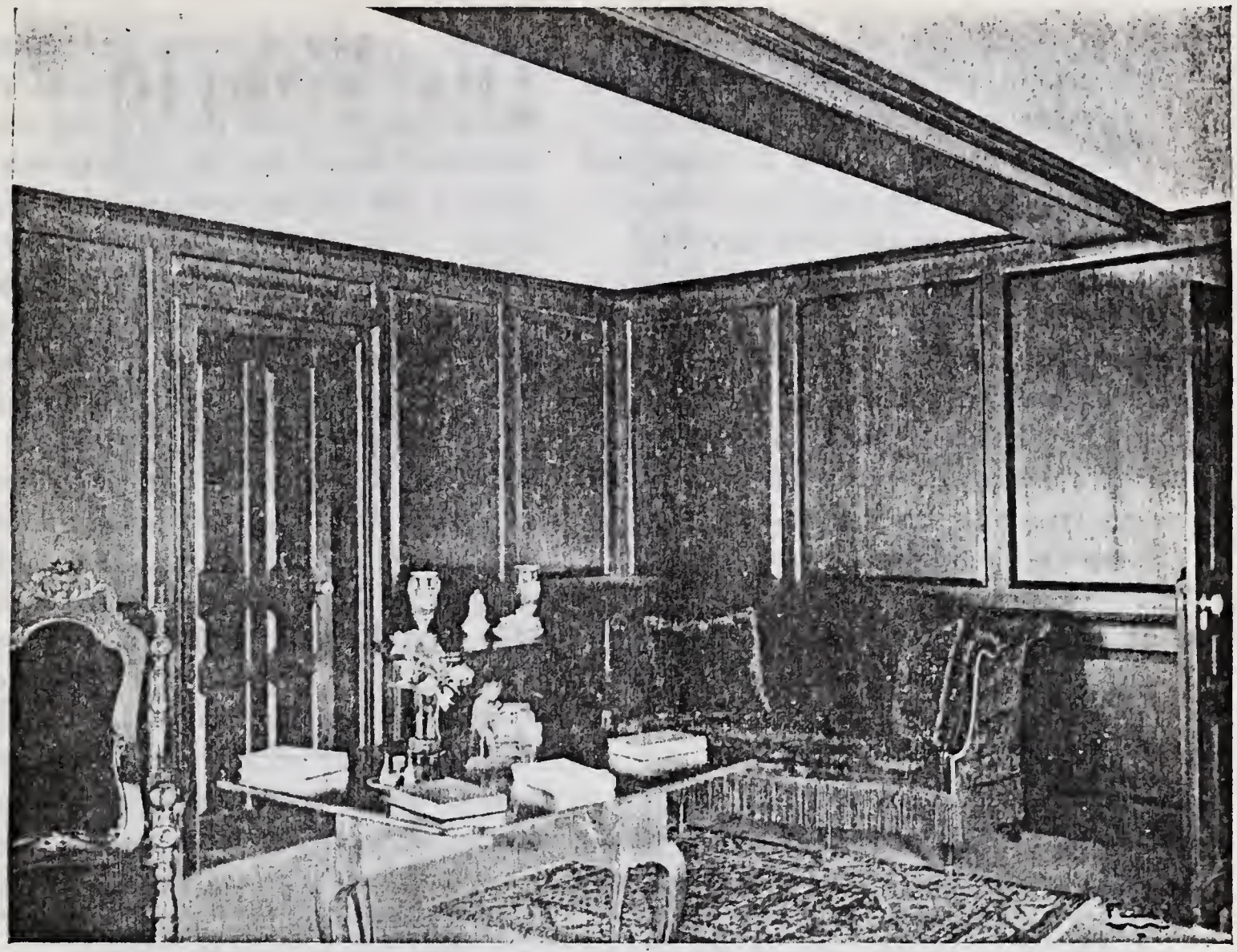


Stairway built in 1731

them dwelt many of Anna Vassall's half-brothers and half-sisters. These families, living on the income from shipping and plantations in the West Indies, led a life of ease and pleasure, very different from that of the small-farm owning class to which John Adams belonged. They were the gentry of the day. In this colony of friends and relatives the Borlands lived happily till the Revolution, in 1775, brought their world crumbling in ruins around them. That spring the Borlands were living in their house in Cambridge, although they still owned the Braintree house and farm, and, to be under the protection of General Gage, fled to Boston with other Tories, taking refuge in their town house. In June, John Borland died from injuries received in a fall from a step-ladder in his attic; and in 1776, when Boston was evacuated, his widow left the country with other Loyalists. In 1778, the Braintree property, although not confiscated, because John Borland had taken no active part against the revolt, was sequestrated and placed in charge of a court appointed to the care of all abandoned Tory property. In 1780, Richard Cranch, a brother-in-law of Abigail Adams, leased the place from the court. Finally, in 1787, John Adams, who was in London, entered into negotiations with John Borland's son, Leonard Vassall Borland, to whom the property had passed, and finally purchased it. The old deed, dated September 26, 1787, still in the possession of the Adams family, gives the consideration, £600, for seven parcels of land in Braintree amounting to seventy-five acres. The first of these, a seven acre tract, being the Old House with its adjoining farmland.

As time went on successive generations have added to the house. It has always been supposed that in 1788 John Adams built the kitchen ell as far as the granite coping; but, as without it the house seems so small for the use made of it, there is a possibility that a smaller ell was there which he enlarged. A print of another house in Braintree which resembled the Old House, built by Leonard Vassall's oldest son at the same time, shows such an ell. Letters and diaries record the following additions: In 1800 John Adams built the large gabled ell containing the Long Room, East Entry, and Study; in 1836 John Quincy Adams built the passage along the north side of the house connecting the two ells; and Charles Francis Adams added thirty feet to the kitchen ell for servants' quarters in 1869, built the stone library in 1870, the stone stable in 1873, and at some time subsequently a porch or veranda on the east side of the Long Room. Brooks Adams removed this veranda in 1925 to get more light on the portraits.

Like all old family homes this house has its record of births, marriages, and deaths. In it Susanna Maria Clark, a grand-daughter of John Adams, was born March 2, 1818; Georgiana Francis Adams, a great-grand-daughter, was born September 10, 1830; and Mary Adams, a great-great-grand-daughter, was born July 27, 1867. Three weddings have taken place in the Long Room: Caroline Amelia Smith, a grand-daughter, to John Peter deWindt, Sunday, September 11, 1814; Mary Adams, a great-grand-daughter, to Henry Parker Quincy, June 20, 1877; and Fanny Crowninshield Homans, a great-great-great-grand-daughter, to Howland Shaw Warren, June 30, 1934. Five of the family have died in the house: Abigail Adams, October 28, 1818; President John Adams, July 4, 1826; Georgiana



The Panelled Room built in 1731

SHOWING THE SOFA UPON WHICH JOHN ADAMS SAT FOR THE PORTRAIT GILBERT STUART PAINTED IN 1823

Francis Adams, John Adams's great-grand-daughter, November 30, 1839; and Abigail Brown Brooks Adams, a grand-daughter-in-law, June 6, 1889. In more recent years the funeral service has been read in the Long Room over two great-grand-daughters-in-law of John Adams: Evelyn Davis Adams, on December 16, 1926; and Mary Ogden Adams, on March 26, 1935.

The Panelled Room

From the gate, a flag-stone walk leads to the entrance of the original house. On the left as you enter is the Panelled Room, so called from the San Domingo mahogany that panels its walls from floor to ceiling. Leonard Vassall panelled his house in Boston with mahogany from his plantations and probably had this done at the same time. The panelling is beautiful, but, because on short winter days he found it dark and depressing, John Adams had it painted white. It has always been thought that in making repairs the mahogany was discovered by accident—the truth is, that Charles Francis Adams knew that the mahogany had been painted because his grandfather disliked the dark wood, and restored the panelling to its natural color when he had the room renovated in 1850.

With its panelling and outlook over the garden, this room, always cool in

summer and sunny in winter, has left more lasting impressions than any other. It has many family associations. Against the east wall is the red velvet sofa upon which John Adams sat for the portrait Gilbert Stuart painted in 1823. John Quincy Adams, wishing to have a likeness of his father in his old age, engaged Gilbert Stuart to paint his portrait, and arranged that the final sitting should be on October 30th, his father's eighty-eighth birthday. Stuart painted the old man sitting on this sofa with his hands resting on his cane as he was accustomed to sit while being read to. A picture for generations that followed to look at with reverence.

Henry Adams has told in his autobiography how he remembered his English-born grandmother, Mrs. John Quincy Adams, the wife of the President, in this room. He wrote as follows:

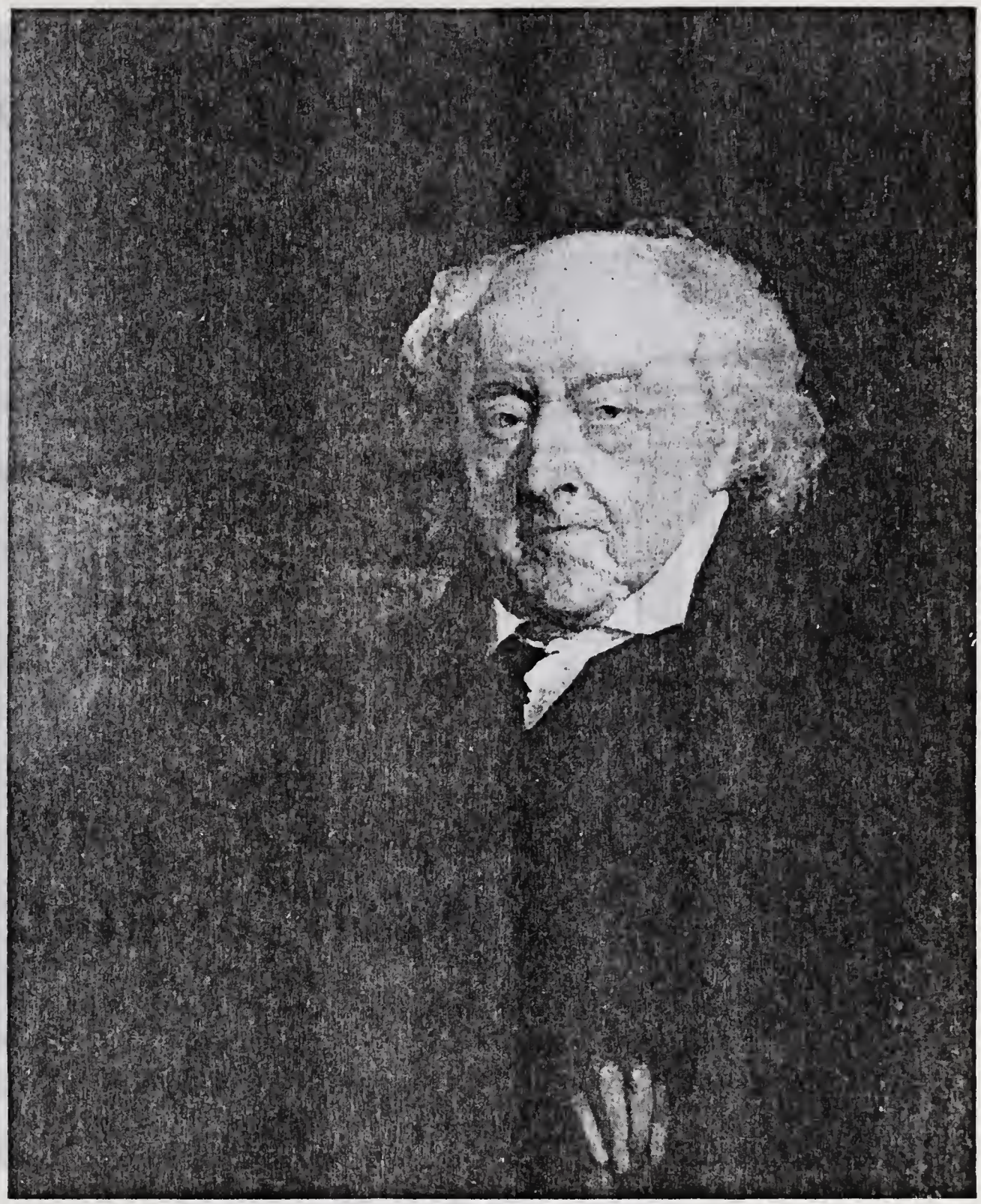
"Then it was that the little Henry, her grandson, first remembered her, from 1843 to 1848, sitting in her panelled room, at breakfast, with her heavy silver tea-pot and sugar-bowl and cream-jug, which still exist somewhere as an heirloom of the modern safety-vault. By that time she was seventy years old or more, and thoroughly weary of being beaten about a stormy world. To the boy she seemed singularly peaceful, a vision of silver gray, presiding over her old President and her Queen Ann mahogany; an exotic, like her Sevres china; an object of deference to every one, and of great affection to her son Charles; but hardly more Bostonian than she had been fifty years before, on her wedding-day, in the shadow of the Tower of London.

"Such a figure was even less fitted than that of her old husband, the President, to impress on a boy's mind, the standards of the coming century. She was Louis Seize, like the furniture. The boy knew nothing of her interior life, which had been, as the venerable Abigail, long since at peace, foresaw, one of severe stress and little pure satisfaction."

Although there are no portraits on the walls of the Panelled Room, its furniture all belonged to the family. The brass fire-irons belonged to John Adams. In the centre of the room is a chestnut table that belonged to his wife Abigail; and chairs and tables that belonged some to Abigail and some to her grandson Charles Francis Adams. On the table is a section of the first Atlantic cable and a bronze match-box in the form of a boy at a grind-stone.

The Dining Room

Across the East Entry from the Panelled Room is the Dining Room. This room, once a parlor, was done over in 1870, a period of bad taste, and much of the charm given it by its Revolutionary beauty lost. Brass latches were replaced by glass door-knobs, shutters by modern blinds, and no trace of the mantle-piece left. Although the original beauty of the room is gone, yet the pictures and furniture remain to give it an interest. John Adams's mahogany dining-table occupies the centre of the room. Upon its extension ends, which are used as side-tables and stand against the north wall, are Sheraton knife-cases that belonged to the two Presidents, and John Quincy Adams's frosted wine decanter with its curious pocket for ice. Against the west wall is a side-board that belonged to Mrs. Brooks Adams. It is a beautiful piece of furniture that had been in her family, the Davis family, for generations, but it has no other associations with the Adams family. On the west wall are portraits of George and Martha



John Adams

1735-1826

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. FROM A PORTRAIT BY GILBERT STUART SHOWING HIM, AGE EIGHTY-EIGHT YEARS, SEATED ON THE SOFA IN THE PANELLED ROOM, AT QUINCY, NOW OWNED BY A DESCENDANT

Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams

(Mrs. John Quincy Adams)

1775-1852

FROM A PORTRAIT OWNED BY A DESCENDANT, PAINTED IN LONDON IN 1797, THE YEAR OF HER "WEDDING-DAY, IN THE SHADOW OF THE TOWER OF LONDON"

"LOUISA WAS CHARMING, LIKE A ROMNEY PORTRAIT."—*Education of Henry Adams*

IT IS THOUGHT THE ARTIST WAS MATHER BROWN

Washington, painted for John Adams when he was Vice-President. A receipt pasted on the back of Washington's portrait reads as follows:

"Received, New York, 17th. April, 1790, of the vice-President of the United States, forty-six dollars and ⅔. For a portrait of the President of the United States and his Lady.

"Edward Savage."

Josiah Quincy, who knew Washington and liked to look at these portraits, used to say that Washington looked just like this portrait before he lost his teeth. Next these, in the angle of the north wall, is a portrait of Edward Boylston, a cousin of Susanna Boylston, the mother of John Adams. He holds in his hand a letter addressed to Edward Wigglesworth, a professor at Harvard.

It was either in this room or in the Panelled Room that Josiah Quincy's son, Josiah, came to those informal Sunday dinners he described in "Figures of the Past." He was then a boy of six or seven, and John Adams seventy-three or four, about the year 1808. He wrote:

"When I was about six years old, I was put to school to the Reverend Peter Whitney,* and, spending the winter in his family, was often asked to dine on Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Adams. This was somewhat of an ordeal for a boy; but the genuine kindness of the President, who had not the smallest chip of an iceberg in his composition, soon made me perfectly at home in his society. With Mrs. Adams there was a shade more formality. A consciousness of age and dignity, which was often somewhat oppressive, was customary with old people of that day in the presence of the young. Something of this Mrs. Adams certainly had, though it wore off or came to be disregarded by me, for in the end I became strongly attached to her. She always dressed handsomely, and her rich silks and laces seemed appropriate to a lady of her dignified position in the town. If there was a little savor of patronage in the generous hospitality she exercised among her simple neighbors, it was never regarded more than a natural emphasis of her undoubted claims to precedence. The aristocratic colonial families were still recognised, for the tide of democracy had not risen high enough to cover these distinctions. The parentage and descent of Mrs. Adams were undoubtedly of weight in establishing her position; although, as we now look at things, the strong personal claims of herself and her husband would seem to have been all sufficient.

"I well remember the modest dinners at the President's, to which I brought a school-boy's appetite. The pudding, generally composed of boiled corn-meal, always constituted the first course. This was the custom of the time,—it being thought desirable to take the edge off one's hunger before reaching the joint. Indeed it was considered wise to stimulate the young to fill themselves with pudding, by the assurance that the boy who managed to eat the most of it should be helped most abundantly to the meat, which was to follow. It need not be said that neither the winner nor his competitors found much room for meat at the close of the contest; and so the domestic economy of the arrangement was very apparent. Miss. Smith, a niece of Mrs. Adams, was an inmate of the President's family, and one of these ladies always carved. Mr. Adams made his contribution to the service of the table in the form of that good-humored, easy banter, which

* Minister of the Unitarian Church in Quincy.

The Dining Room

BUILT IN 1731

makes a dinner of herbs more digestible than is a stalled ox without it. At a later period of our acquaintance, I find preserved in my journals frequent though too meagre reports of his conversation. But at the time of which I am writing there is no word recoverable. I can distinctly picture to myself a certain iron spoon which the old gentleman once fished up from the depths of a pudding in which it had been unwittingly cooked; but of the pleasant things he said in those easy dinner-talks no trace remains."

The East or Long Hall

From the Dining Room a door cut through the thick brick wall of the Vassall part of the house opens into the East or Long Hall, in the gabled ell John Adams built in 1800. Although this ell is not nearly so well built as the original house it has lasted many years. In a corner by the door to the Portico is a stand of canes. Some of these are presentation canes: one, the longest, with a gold knob, belonged to John Quincy Adams; another, made from a pear-tree that John Quincy Adams planted in the White House garden, with a long ivory handle carved like a hound's head, was presented to his son Charles Francis; another, a black ebony cane with a gold knob, was given by her brothers to Abigail, the wife of Charles Francis Adams, when in her old age she became lame, but she always preferred to use the cane with the hound's head handle. All are inscribed with the names of the owners and some also with the names of those that gave them.

The furniture has no particular interest apart from its ownership. Over the stairs are two oval mirrors in gilt frames that belonged to Abigail Adams. Against the west wall is a hand-carved table with a marble top that belonged to John Adams. Hanging above it are the portraits of John Quincy Adams and his wife Louisa Catherine that Leslie painted in London in 1816, when John Quincy Adams was minister to England. Between these portraits, inclosed in a glass covered frame, hangs a wreath of embroidered flowers, an intricate and skilful piece of handiwork, with this inscription:

"Presented to Mrs. Adams, Lady of the President of the United States of America, by the pupils of the Seminary for Female Education at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1826."

John Adams, in letters written in 1777 to his wife and twelve-year old daughter Abigail, described a visit to this same school.

From the East Hall the old original door with its brass locks and knocker opens upon the South Portico. It was at this door that Henry Adams had that encounter with his grandfather, John Quincy Adams, which he recounted in his autobiography: One morning in June, when he was about seven and his grandfather nearly eighty, he was having an altercation with his mother in this doorway because he refused to go to school. He was in a fair way to win, when the door of the President's study at the head of the stairs opened, the old ex-President slowly came down, picked up his hat and cane, took the boy's hand, and, without a word, walked with him, paralyzed with awe, to his school. There was no scolding, no moralizing, the old ex-President seemed hardly conscious of the boy's presence. Not till he saw him in his seat did he release his hand and depart. Henry Adams wrote that this was an example of force being a form of right, and gave his grandfather due credit for not abusing that right by talking, but, instead, observing an intelligent silence. He also

wrote that he was ever after on the best of terms with his grandfather, and that somewhere there is a little critically edited book of Nursery Rhymes with his name written on the fly-leaf in the old ex-President's trembling hand. In his diary, John Quincy Adams made only this short reference to the episode:

"Quincy, 27 June, 1843, Tuesday:—I walked this morning with my son's third son, Henry Brooks, to his school, Mrs. (illegible)."

The Long Room

From the East Hall, two doors, ornamented with handsome brass latches and locks, open into the Long Room, a room well lighted by low French windows on the east. This was Abigail Adams's Drawing Room.

The furniture is not typical of any one period—each generation of the family has contributed something, and each is remembered by what it left. The graceful Louis XV. chairs belonged to John Adams. He purchased them for apartments he had in Neuilly, when he was sent to France during the Revolution to negotiate treaties. These chairs have always been called the "Lafayette Chairs" because Lafayette and Franklin often occupied them when they came to the house John and Abigail afterward took in Auteuil, when John Adams was Minister to France after the War. Originally the chairs were upholstered in red damask, then done over in green, and finally, as now, in a brocaded covering selected by Brooks Adams. In the centre of the room, odd-looking amidst the graceful French furniture, is a clumsy four-seated ottoman that Charles Francis Adams brought home from England in 1868. Near it is a curious tete-a-tete double arm-chair, with a work-box between the two parts, that belonged to his wife's family—the Brooks family of Medford. Against the north wall are the two "Dolly Madison" chairs, two gilded straight-backed chairs purchased by Charles Francis Adams at the White House sale of President Madison's furniture. One on each side of the fireplace are Abigail Adams's two fire-screens, used to protect the face from the heat of the fire. Originally of gray satin, now faded with age, they are reminders of the days when the fire was the only source of heat, and one side of the body burned while the other side froze. The brass fire-irons belonged to John Adams. Above on the mantlepiece is a little ornamental clock with bronze figures that belonged to Charles Francis Adams's oldest child, Louisa Catherine—"Sister Louisa," Brooks Adams always called her—who, always gay and brilliant, left a deep impression on her brothers. Henry Adams, in the "Education," tells of her dying slowly of tetanus in Florence, cheerful to the last. On the tables are many china ornaments of unknown ownership; and photograph albums containing pictures of family friends, their children, and men famous in England during the Civil War who gave their pictures to Charles Francis Adams when he was Minister to England.

In the Long Room are most of the family portraits. On the north wall are portraits of John Adams's oldest child, Abigail, and her husband William Stephens Smith. These portraits were painted in London by William Mather Brown in 1786, the year they were married. Over the fireplace is a portrait of General James Warren of Plymouth, to whose wife Marcia, or "Mercy," Abigail Adams wrote many letters. Across the room are the well-known portraits of John and Abigail that Gilbert Stuart painted about

Mrs. Louisa Catherine (Johnson) Adams

1775-1852

WIFE OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS. FROM A PORTRAIT BY CHARLES ROBERT LESLIE, PAINTED IN LONDON, IN 1816. HANGS IN EAST HALL

John Quincy Adams

1767-1848

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. FROM A PORTRAIT BY CHARLES ROBERT LESLIE, PAINTED IN LONDON, IN 1816. HANGS IN EAST HALL

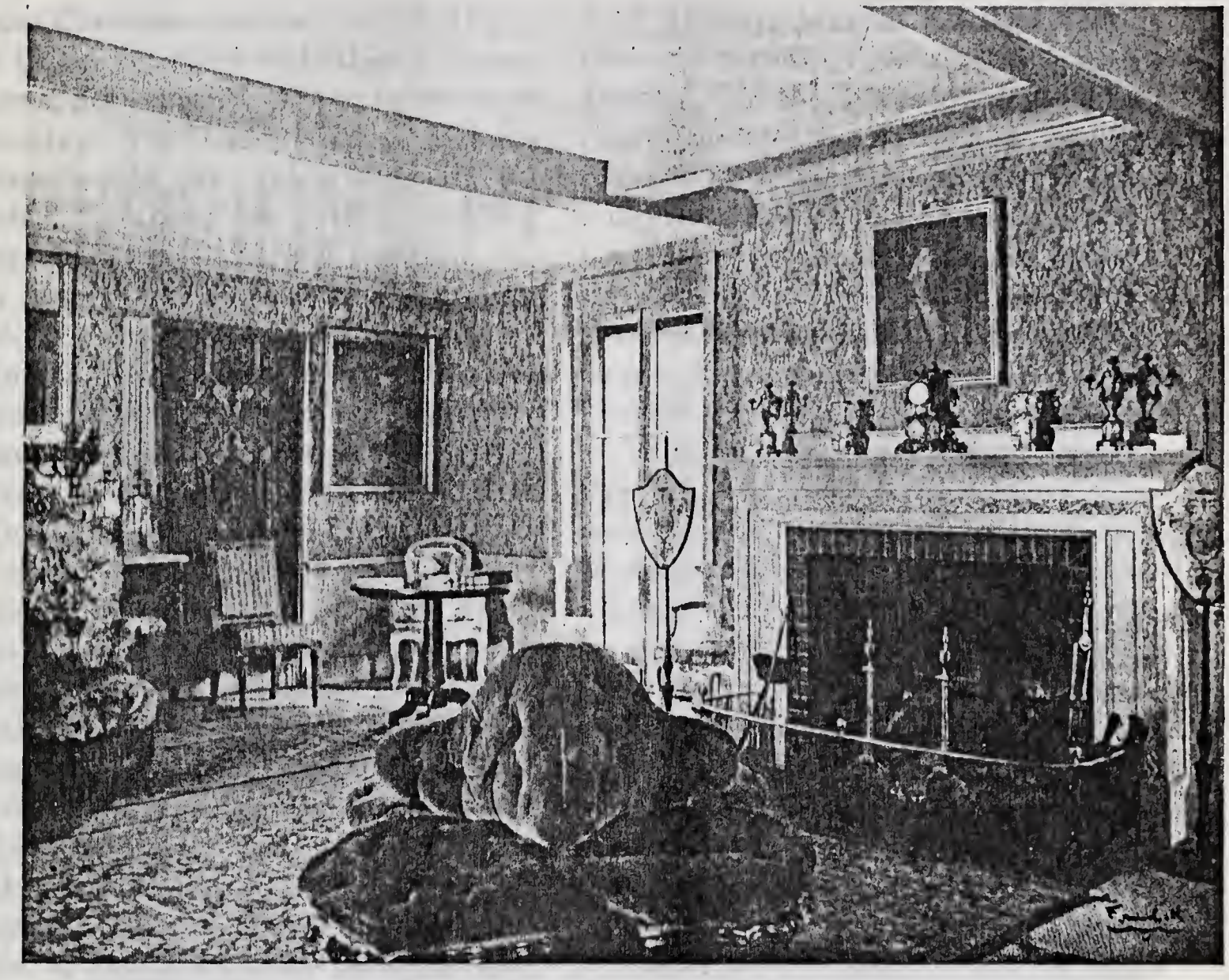
Artificial wreath presented to Mrs. John Quincy Adams

HANGS IN EAST HALL

The East or Long Hall

GROUND FLOOR

"HE WAS IN A FAIR WAY TO WIN, AND WAS HOLDING HIS OWN, WITH SUFFICIENT ENERGY, AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LONG STAIRCASE WHICH LED UP TO THE DOOR OF THE PRESIDENT'S LIBRARY, WHEN THE DOOR OPENED, AND THE OLD MAN SLOWLY CAME DOWN."—*Education of Henry Adams*



The Long Room, built in 1800

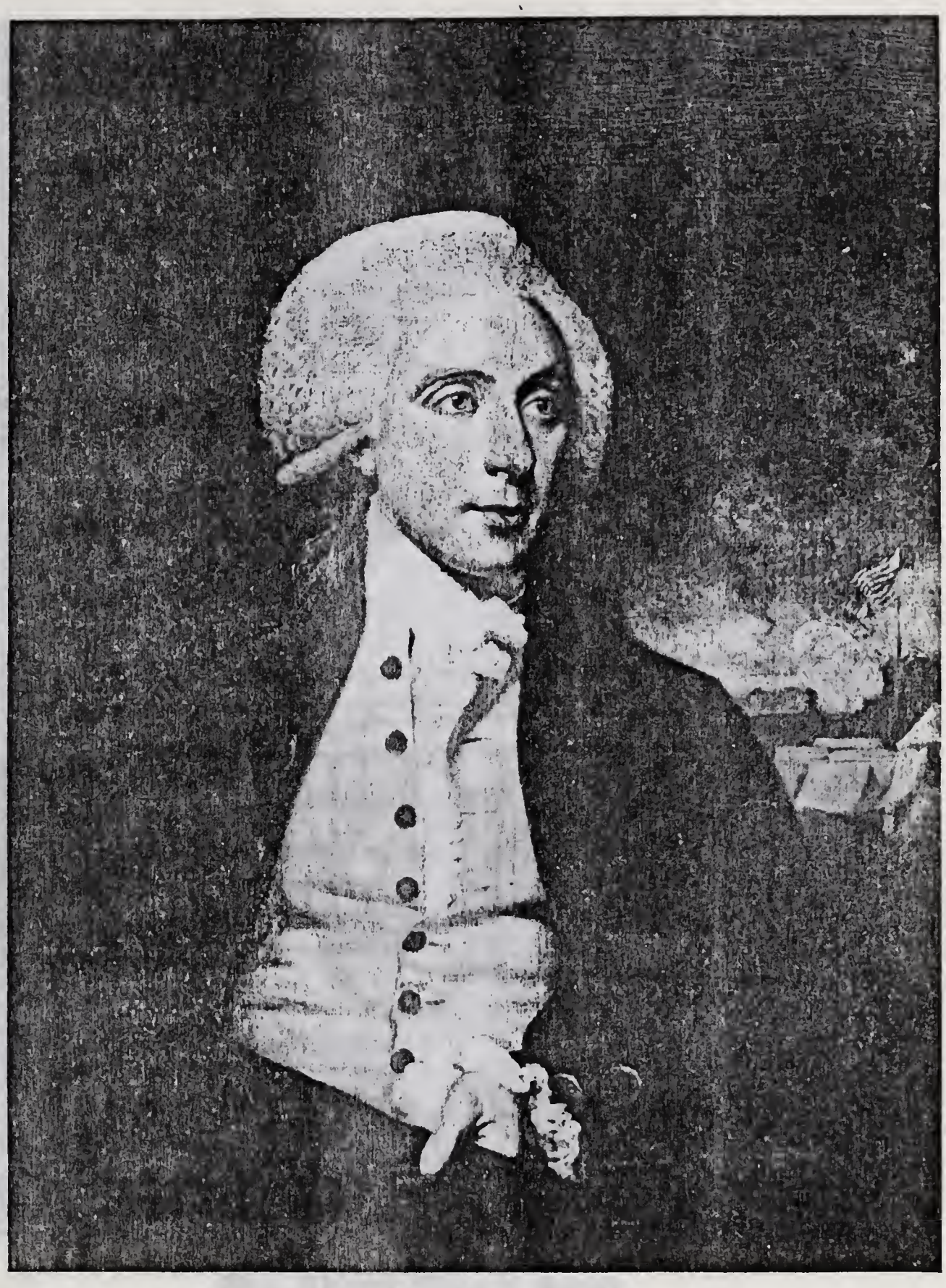
1800; and between them a copy of the painting Copley made in 1795 of John Quincy Adams, when, at twenty-eight, he was Minister to Holland. In the southeast corner is a quaint portrait by an unknown Dutch artist of a two-year-old child always supposed to have been Abigail Adams's grandfather, Colonel John Quincy, 1689-1767, for whom the town of Quincy and his great-grandson, President John Quincy Adams, were named. In 1934 it was discovered that this portrait could not be of Colonel Quincy, for the costume is that usually worn by girls, and on the portrait is written "Aet, 2, 1670"—twenty years before Colonel Quincy was born. As the portrait is strikingly similar to portraits of the Mason children also painted in 1670, it is probable that this is a portrait of Alice Mason, born in 1668, an aunt of Colonel Quincy's wife. Since Alice Mason died childless her portrait would naturally pass to her sister's children. Next this is a portrait of Colonel Quincy's mother, Anna Shepard. At the right of the fireplace there used to be a portrait of Thomas Jefferson, said to have been acquired by John Adams in the days of their early friendship. It is now owned by one of the family, and the Society hopes some day to have a copy placed where the original used to be. In the Long Room three golden weddings have been celebrated: John and Abigail Adams, October 25, 1814; John Quincy and

Louisa Catherine Adams, July 26, 1847; and Charles Francis and Abigail Brown Adams, September 5, 1879. In the next generation the later Charles Francis Adams would have celebrated, on November 8, 1915, his golden wedding where his fathers did had he lived one year more. He died in the preceding March.

In the Long Room, after a lapse of almost fifty years, General Lafayette again occupied the same chairs he had last seen in Auteuil. In 1824 he had come to Boston to be present at the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill Monument; and on Sunday, August 29th, went out to Quincy to have dinner with John Adams, his old friend of Revolutionary days. Josiah Quincy has left an account of Boston's reception of Lafayette in "Figures of the Past." Of the visit to John Adams the following description is taken from the diary of John Adams's grandson, Charles Francis Adams, a Junior at Harvard. As the Marquis came on Sunday the visit was made informally —there was no public reception. Sunday dinners in those days were at three. The General and his escort arrived at half-past-two. The dinner took place in the Dining Room and the reception in the Long Room. The Piazza, or South Portico, upon which General Lafayette received the people of Quincy looks today much as it did then. Charles Francis Adams wrote:

"Quincy, August 29, 1824: Arose but cannot say I was quite lucky enough to breakfast, for somehow or other the family quite forgot me and I was obliged to do without. The house was in a terrible bustle as this was the day appointed to receive General Lafayette. For my own part I endeavored to keep myself as quiet as possible all the morning. I did not attend Meeting because I wished to continue the arduous task of writing up my Journal. On this I was employed pretty nearly all the time. I could not help strongly remarking the contrast between a dinner here and one at home where it is not uncommon, and passes off without the difficulty of [this] day; but here it is so out of the usual routine that it makes quite a disturbance in the household. The General arrived at half-past-two, attended by his son, M. Le Vasseur, his secretary, Mr. Colden and Mr. Quincy. Governor Eustis arrived soon after. The Marquis met my Grandfather with pleasure and I thought with some surprise, because really I do not think he expected to see him quite so feeble as he is. It struck me that he was affected somewhat in that manner. Otherwise the meeting was a pleasant one. Grandfather exerted himself more than usual, and as to conversation appeared more striking than ever, certainly more agreeable as his asperity of temper is worn away. I had the honor of an introduction to the Marquis and that was all. He is a mincing man in his manners, he has much ease and grace and knows the proper side of men. His lot is an enviable one on the whole, as without being an extremely great man he has received honors which are the lot of only a few. His son is a plain simple man, without assumption, his appearance is a little against him but his manner is easy and agreeable. I incline to think he is not a man of remarkable mind, but will pass through life with ease, and rest without trouble when he dies. . . .

"How many people in this country would have been delighted with my situation at this moment, to see three distinguished men dining at the same table, with the reflections all brought up concerning the old days of the Revolution



Colonel William Stephens Smith

1757-1816

SECRETARY TO JOHN ADAMS; MARRIED HIS DAUGHTER ABIGAIL. FROM A PORTRAIT BY MATHER BROWN, PAINTED IN LONDON IN 1786 HANGS IN THE LONG ROOM

Mrs. Abigail (Adams) Smith

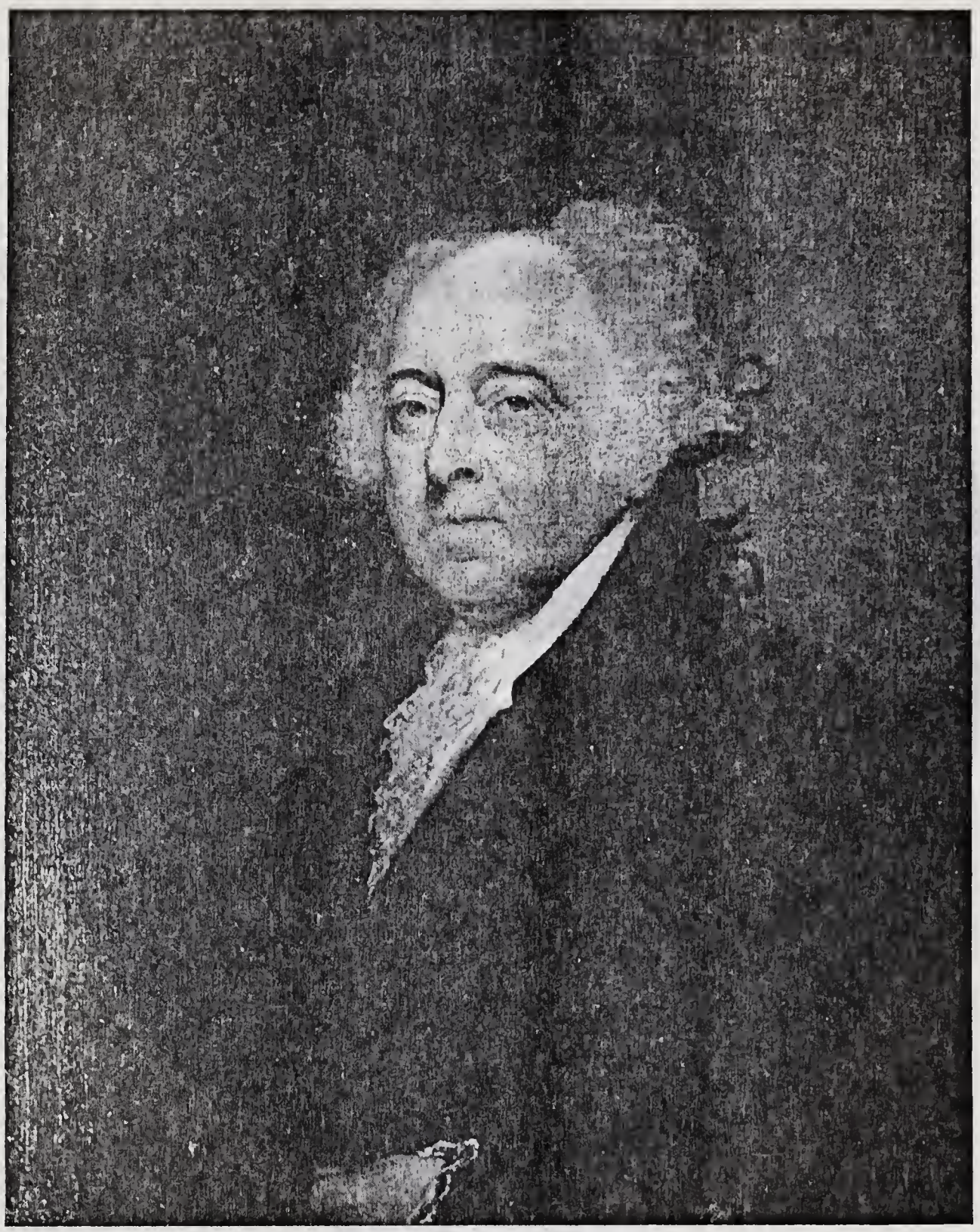
1765-1813

DAUGHTER OF JOHN ADAMS, FROM A PORTRAIT BY MATHER BROWN PAINTED IN LONDON IN 1786. HANGS IN THE LONG ROOM

Mrs. Abigail (Smith) Adams

1744-1818

WIFE OF JOHN ADAMS, FROM A PORTRAIT BY GILBERT STUART, PAINTED IN 1804. HANGS IN THE LONG ROOM



John Adams

1735-1826

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. FROM A PORTRAIT BY GILBERT STUART PAINTED IN 1798. HANGS IN THE LONG ROOM

John Quincy Adams

1767-1848

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. FROM A PORTRAIT BY JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, PAINTED IN LONDON, IN 1795. NOW EXHIBITED AT THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
A COPY IS IN THE LONG ROOM

in which they were conspicuous actors, and for their exertions in which the country is grateful. It is a subject which can excite much thought as it embraces the high feelings of human nature. The presence of my father* would have been an additional pleasure, but he did not arrive and it is probable that he will not for nine days. My grandfather appeared considerably affected, and rose after dinner was over. The Marquis had to pass through the ceremony of shaking hands with all the town of Quincy which had collected together to see him. He first stood on the Piazza, and the men went up one by one; then went into the inner room, and there saluted all the ladies. I wish to recollect the scene of this day, as the actors will soon depart from this busy scene, and memory only can bring to life their looks, their tones, and their language."

The West Bedroom

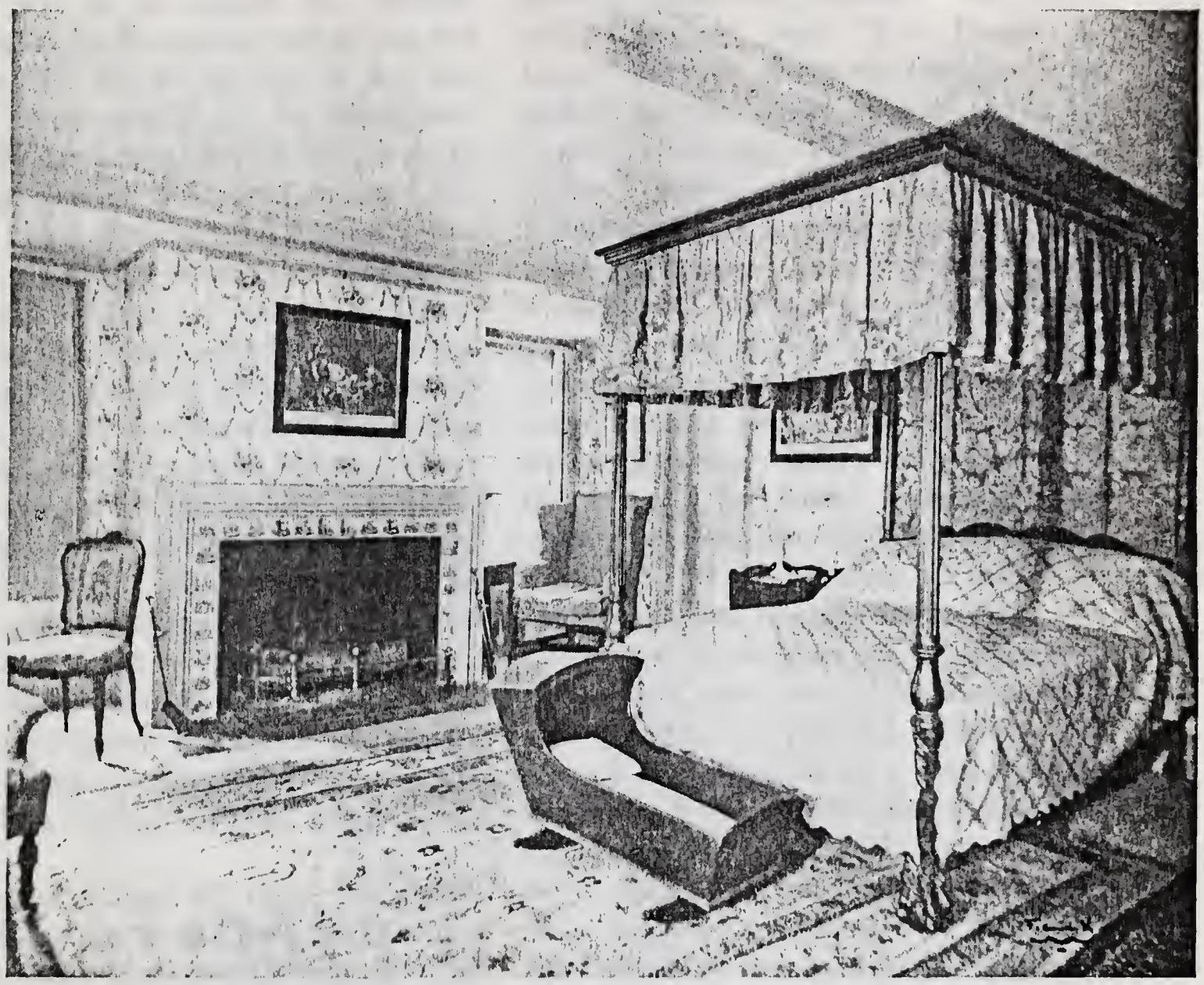
From the Short Hall, or West Entry, in the Vassall part of the house, the old staircase winds up to the door of the West Bedroom on the second floor. As in all the older part of the house, signs of the handiwork of those days can be seen in this room. On the oak beams, hardened by time, that went into the construction of the house two hundred years ago, the adze marks of the hewing are plainly visible. What first strikes the visitor on entering on a summer day, is the yellow and green brilliancy of the garden beneath the windows.

Sunny and warm, this room for four generations has also been used by each Lady of the House as her writing-room, and each for some reason is remembered in it. Around the fireplace are Sadler and Wells tiles that John Quincy Adams brought home when he returned from Prussia in 1801. These he gave to his mother, Abigail, who placed them here. They are a type of tile, now rare and much prized by collectors, printed from a copper plate like an engraving, a method invented by James Sadler of Liverpool, whose signature appears on four of these. In the back of the fireplace is an iron fire back bearing the date 1788. John Quincy Adams put this in when he had the room done over, to commemorate the year his father came here to live.

On the walls are engravings that have hung there for generations: Three of these by Greuze, depicting life in a humble dwelling, belonged to John Adams; six others, colored prints, John Quincy Adams bought in 1799 and 1800, when he was Minister to Prussia.

The old four-post bed in this room has belonged to each Lady of the House. In 1818, Abigail Adams died in this bed, and in 1889, the later Abigail, the wife of her grandson Charles Francis Adams. In this room was born, in 1867, one of the only two Adams children born in the Old House — Mary, the daughter of Charles Francis Adams, son of the Minister to England. Near the fireplace is a large high-backed arm-chair that belonged to John Adams. The later Abigail also had her chair in this room when at the end of her life she became lame. To her grandchildren she was a familiar sight, sitting in her arm-chair with her little skye terrier beside her, talking brightly to her visitors who sat on a long sofa near by. At the foot of the bed is a little cradle on rockers that came from the two cottages at the other end of the town — the birth-places of the two Presidents. A family record preserved with the cradle states that it was made by the

* John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State in Monroe's administration.



Abigail Adams's Bedroom

THE WEST BEDROOM, BUILT IN 1731

village undertaker, who in those days made all sorts of family furniture, and that in it has been rocked to sleep five generations of the Adams family including the two Presidents.

In the window in the southwest corner of the room, overlooking the garden, is a writing desk with glass doors and shelves in the upper part. This desk belonged to Louisa Catherine Adams. After her the later Abigail, and then Mrs. Brooks Adams wrote their letters at this desk. Henry Adams in the "Education" has again pictured his grandmother, as she sat here writing:

"The Madam was a little more remote than the President, but more decorative. She stayed much in her own room with the Dutch tiles, looking out on her garden with the box walks, and seemed a fragile creature to a boy who sometimes brought her a note or a message, and took a distinct pleasure in looking at her delicate face under what seemed to him very becoming caps. He liked her refined figure; her gentle manner; her vague effect of not belonging there, but to Washington or to Europe, like her furniture, and writing desk with little glass doors above and little eighteenth century volumes in old binding, labelled 'Peregrine Pickle' or 'Tom Jones' or 'Hannah

More.' Try as she might, the Madam could never be Bostonian, and it was her cross in life, but to the boy it was her charm. Even at that age he felt drawn to it. The Madam's life had been in truth far from Boston. She was born in London in 1775, daughter of Joshua Johnson, an American merchant, brother of Governor Thomas Johnson of Maryland; and Catherine Nuth, of an English family in London. Driven from England by the Revolutionary War, Joshua Johnson took his family to Nantes, where they remained till the peace."

In the entry outside the room is an old eight-day clock, with the name of its maker on its brass face. This clock has always been kept in repair, and still patiently ticks off the minutes, tolls the hours and registers the days of the month as it did when new. Referring to this clock John Quincy Adams wrote in his diary:

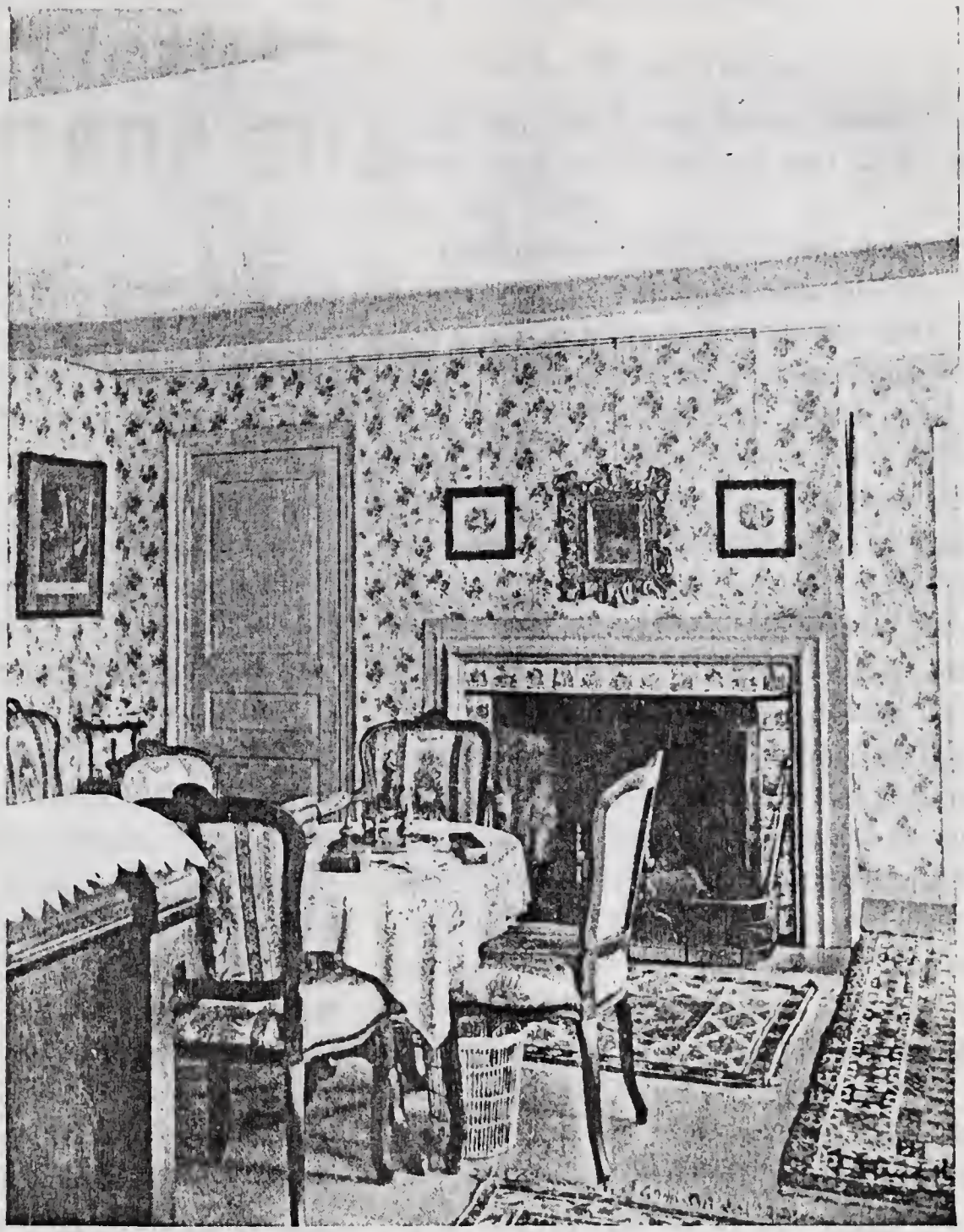
"Quincy, August 28, 1830. Mr. Reed, a mender of clocks was here, and cleaned the old clock made by Willard at Lexington for my father, and now about sixty years old."

The Centre Bedroom or Guest Room

Across the entry from the West Bedroom is the Centre Bedroom or Guest Room. No family events are connected with this room, but the pictures and furniture all belonged to some one of the family.

Among the pictures on the walls are eleven old engravings that belonged to John Adams. On the west wall are two rough wood-cuts entitled "The Death of Washington" and "The Tears of America"—depicting crudely and quaintly the grief of the country over Washington's death. Over the fireplace are two pictures by Bartolozzi, entitled "The Power of Beauty" and "The Power of Love." Directly above the fireplace is an Italian mirror, given, about 1870, by Louisa Catherine Kuhn—the "Sister Louisa" whose clock is on the Long Room mantlepiece—to her mother, Mrs. Charles Francis Adams. Across the room is another mirror, with hand-carved gilded frame, that belonged to Abigail Adams—dim and tarnished with age, its silver backing peeling off, one wonders whose faces it may have reflected. Around the fireplace are Sadler and Wells tiles similar to those in the West Bedroom, evidently part of the same set that John Quincy Adams brought home. In a corner of the room is an old double bed of heavy dark wood ornamented with brass that belonged to Daniel Webster. He gave it in settlement of a debt to Peter Chardon Brooks; from him it passed to his son-in-law, Charles Francis Adams, who placed it here. Near by is a little three-legged wash-stand with a tiny jug and basin that belonged to John Adams. At a window across the room is a larger wash-stand of John Adams's time; with an equipment of large wash-basin, foot-bowl and pitcher of the Victorian period, brought home from London by his grandson in 1868. Against the opposite wall is John Quincy Adams's travelling bureau. It is a curious piece of equipment, combining arrangements for all washing and dressing necessities when travelling together with a desk containing places for writing materials and document cases. Even a little hidden drawer is built in under the ink-well.

In the passage outside this room are two pieces of bedroom furniture, once needed to overcome the discomfort of early days but only curiosities now: a nicely engraved warming-pan that was



The Guest Room

BUILT IN 1731

one of Abigail Adams's wedding gifts—a very common gift in those days—and an odd-looking tin foot-bath, made roughly in the shape of a huge boot, which belonged to her grandson's period.

The East or Long Hall
SECOND FLOOR

From the Guest Room, as from the Dining Room beneath, a doorway cut through the brick wall of the Vassall part of the house leads into the upper East or Long Hall.

This hall on the second floor, over the entrance and hall below, is only an entry for the rooms and space for the staircase. All this part of the house is in the ell John Adams built in 1800. In this hall are several pieces of furniture, but only one of much interest. At the head of the stairs is a Chinese cabinet that Mrs. Charles Francis Adams bought from Mrs. Tufts of Weymouth, a family friend. Along the walls are five old black and gold painted chairs with spindle backs and rush seats, part of a set of thirteen that belonged to John and Abigail Adams; two of these are in the Panelled Room. When Thomas Boylston Adams moved his family from the Old House in 1829, he took this set with him; when his daughter Elizabeth died—the "little Elizabeth" of Abigail Adams's letters—she requested in her will that these chairs be returned to the Mansion. The interesting piece of furniture is an old Dutch chest of drawers almost seven feet long, with a peculiar bulging front decorated with rams' heads on the corners, resting on heavy claw-like feet. The house has few linen closets as it was the custom of the Revolutionary period to keep all linen in chests like this. John Adams bought this chest in Holland in 1782, and brought it home when he returned from England in 1788. On a shelf above the chest is a bust of General Lafayette.

The Study

As into the Long Room beneath, two doors with brass latches and locks open into the Study.

This room, built by John Adams for a library, having windows on the east and south is always cool in summer. Because the Study with its furnishings was used mostly by the two Presidents it is associated with them alone. John Adams, after the Presidency, spent much of his time here with his books; here he carried on that correspondence with Jefferson which has since been published. In this room he died. Then John Quincy Adams, when he was in Quincy in the summers, had this room for his library and writing-room. In the next generation, Charles Francis Adams did his work here till he built the stone library in 1870.

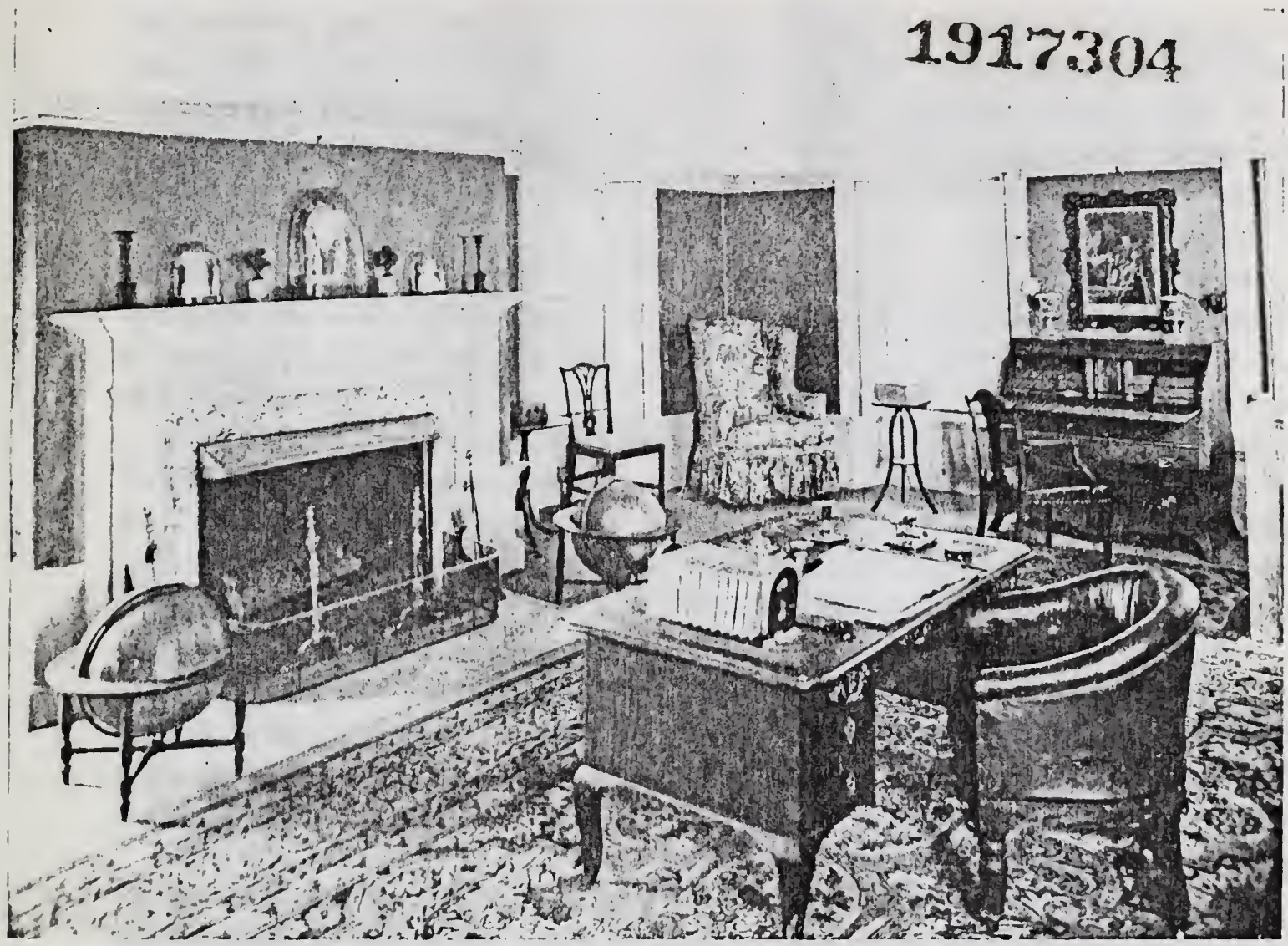
Almost all the furniture and pictures belonged to the two Presidents. The brass fire-irons in the fireplace and the two folding card tables near by belonged to John Adams. One on each side of the fireplace are the two globes, now long out of date, that John Quincy Adams used. He delighted in the study of astronomy, and one of these, a celestial globe, shows the signs of the zodiac in fanciful form. At the centre table, facing the fireplace, is his study chair—leather-covered with rounded back and sides. This chair has been used by three generations of the family. On the mantlepiece stands John Quincy Adams's gilt ornamental First Empire clock, brought home when he returned from England in 1817 to be Secretary of State in Monroe's administration. His grandson Henry Adams replaced this in the Study. Against the north wall are two high cab-

The East or Long Hall

SECOND FLOOR. THE DOOR TO JOHN ADAMS'S STUDY IS AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS
THE OVAL MIRRORS BELONGED TO JOHN AND ABIGAIL ADAMS

inets that belonged to John Adams. One of these, inlaid with brass four-leaved clovers, is of the original high-boy type, with folding doors, and drawers of varying size. Between the south windows is a piece of furniture—a heavy chest of drawers with a sliding top like a desk—that has been in the family longer than any other. John Adams had it in the cottage he lived in after he was married, but how it came into his possession is not known. Brooks Adams prized it highly. The engravings on the walls have been in the house since John Adams's time: On the west wall are engravings of Trumbull's "Battle of Bunker Hill" and "Death of Montgomery"; by the fireplace is a sketch of the Old House as it was when John Adams bought it—this sketch is reproduced in this book; over the desk against the south wall is an engraving of Henry Laurens, President of the Continental Congress in 1877-78, and one of the Peace Commission in 1782. In this room there are no family portraits.

To the Adams family the memory of John Adams, more than any other, is associated with the Study. In a corner of the room is the high-backed upholstered arm-chair in which he used to sit, reading and dozing, at the end of his life, and in which he was sitting when, on July 4th,



John Adams's Study

BUILT IN 1800. HE DIED WHILE SEATED IN THE HIGH CHAIR SHOWN STANDING IN THE CORNER

1826, those with him saw that the end was at hand.

That July 4th, a jubilee marking the fiftieth anniversary of independence, was observed with special celebrations all over the country. At last the country was at peace and prosperous. Two wars had been brought to a successful conclusion; political dissensions had died down, for not yet had the coming Civil War cast its shadow ahead; and the representatives of the young Republic were received by all the greater courts of Europe. The goal had been attained—the thirteen colonies were a nation. In Quincy the townspeople hoped to have John Adams present at their celebration, but his strength was ebbing too fast for this to be possible. Since John Adams could not be there himself, the orator of the day, the Reverened Peter Whitney, called at the Old House on Friday morning, June 30th, and asked him to give his townsmen some message, or toast as the custom was, suitable to the occasion. His grandson's account of the result of this visit is as follows:

"'I will give you,' said he, 'Independence Forever.' He was asked if he would add anything to it, and he replied, 'Not a word.' Looking back from this distance of time, it would seem as though another word would have spoiled it. In that brief sentiment Mr. Adams infused the essence of his whole character, and of his lifelong labors for his country. At Quincy

the exercises passed and the banquet began. The orator of the day here again records the following: 'I presented the toast obtained from the President, and it was received with unceasing shouts.' As these shouts were rising to the skies, shouts which might have been caught by his ears, had they been longer sensitive to receive them, the spirit of Mr. Adams was passing away."

John Adams's great-grandson, Charles Francis Adams, made reference to this day in a history of Quincy he wrote, called "Three Episodes of Massachusetts History." At risk of repetition this reference is also quoted, because it contains lines from a letter John Adams had written to Abigail, fifty years before, when Congress passed the resolution to declare independence.

"On the 4th of July, 1826, the town celebrated with special rejoicings the fiftieth anniversary of independence. It was celebrated, as its sturdiest supporter had fifty years before predicted it would be, as 'a day of deliverance, with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations.' On that fair, glad day—in the midst of peace and prosperity and political good feeling, with the sound of joyous bells and booming guns ringing in his ears, with his own toast of 'Independence Forever' still lingering on the lips of his townsmen—the spirit of the old patriot passed away. But he had lived to see with his own eyes that 'ravishing light and glory,' the distant rays of which had reached him in 1776, and he had found that the end was indeed 'more than worth all the means.'"

When John Adams died, his son, President John Quincy Adams, was in Washington. Living in the house with John Adams, at this time, was his youngest son, Thomas Boylston, with his family, and Susanna Boylston Clark a grand-daughter. On July 3rd, Susanna Clark wrote John Quincy Adams that his father's death might occur any time. This letter reached Washington on the 8th, the day after the funeral, and at five the next morning John Quincy Adams, accompanied by his son John, set out for Quincy. On the road that day he learned of his father's death, and that evening, at Baltimore, read an account of it in the "New York Evening Post" of the 7th. As travel in those days was slow, it was not till the 12th that he reached Boston, where he was met by his son George. He wrote in his diary:

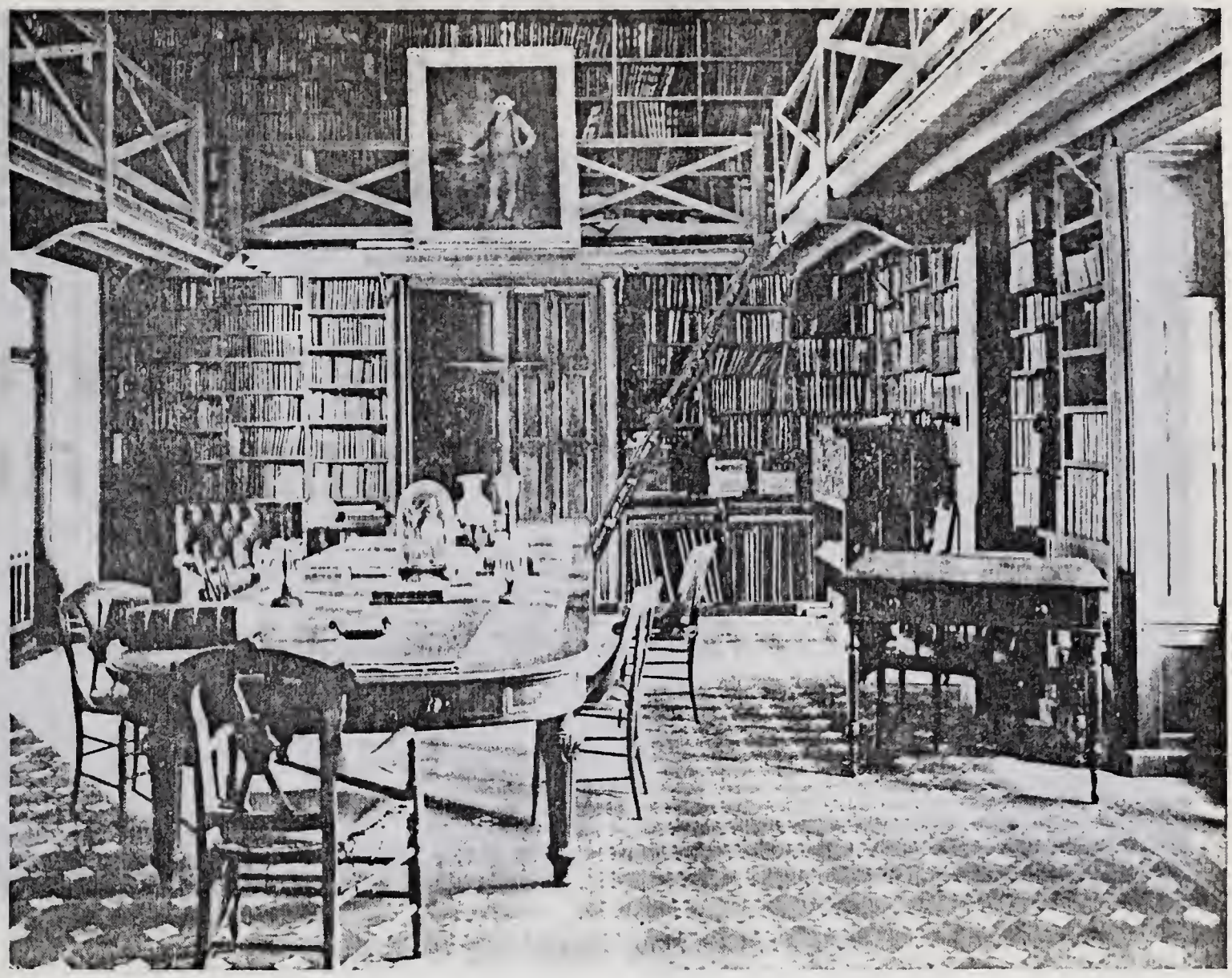
"Boston, July 12, 1826. It [the funeral] took place on Friday, the 7th. There was a great concourse of people from this and neighboring towns. Mr. Whitney delivered the sermon, from I Chronicles, XXLX, 28; 'He died in a good old age, full of honor.' About two thousand persons took a last look at his lifeless face, and all that was mortal of John Adams was deposited in the tomb.

"Quincy, July 13, 1826: After breakfast I came out with my two sons, George and John, to Quincy. I found at my father's house my brother with his family. . . .

"Everything about the house is the same. I was not fully sensible of the change till I entered his bedchamber,* the place where I had last taken leave of him, and where I had most sat with him at my last two yearly visits to him at this place. That moment was inexpressibly painful, and struck me as it had been an arrow to the heart. My father and mother have departed. The charm which has always made this house to me an abode of enchantment is dissolved; and yet my

* The West Bedroom.

THIS PORTRAIT, BY AN UNKNOWN ARTIST, HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUPPOSED TO BE A PORTRAIT OF COLONEL JOHN QUINCY, 1689-1767, FOR WHOM THE TOWN OF QUINCY WAS NAMED, SHOWING HIM AT THE AGE OF TWO; BUT IT HAS BEEN FOUND IT CANNOT BE JOHN QUINCY AND IS PROBABLY JOHN QUINCY'S AUNT ALICE MASON. HANGS IN THE LONG ROOM. SEE TEXT

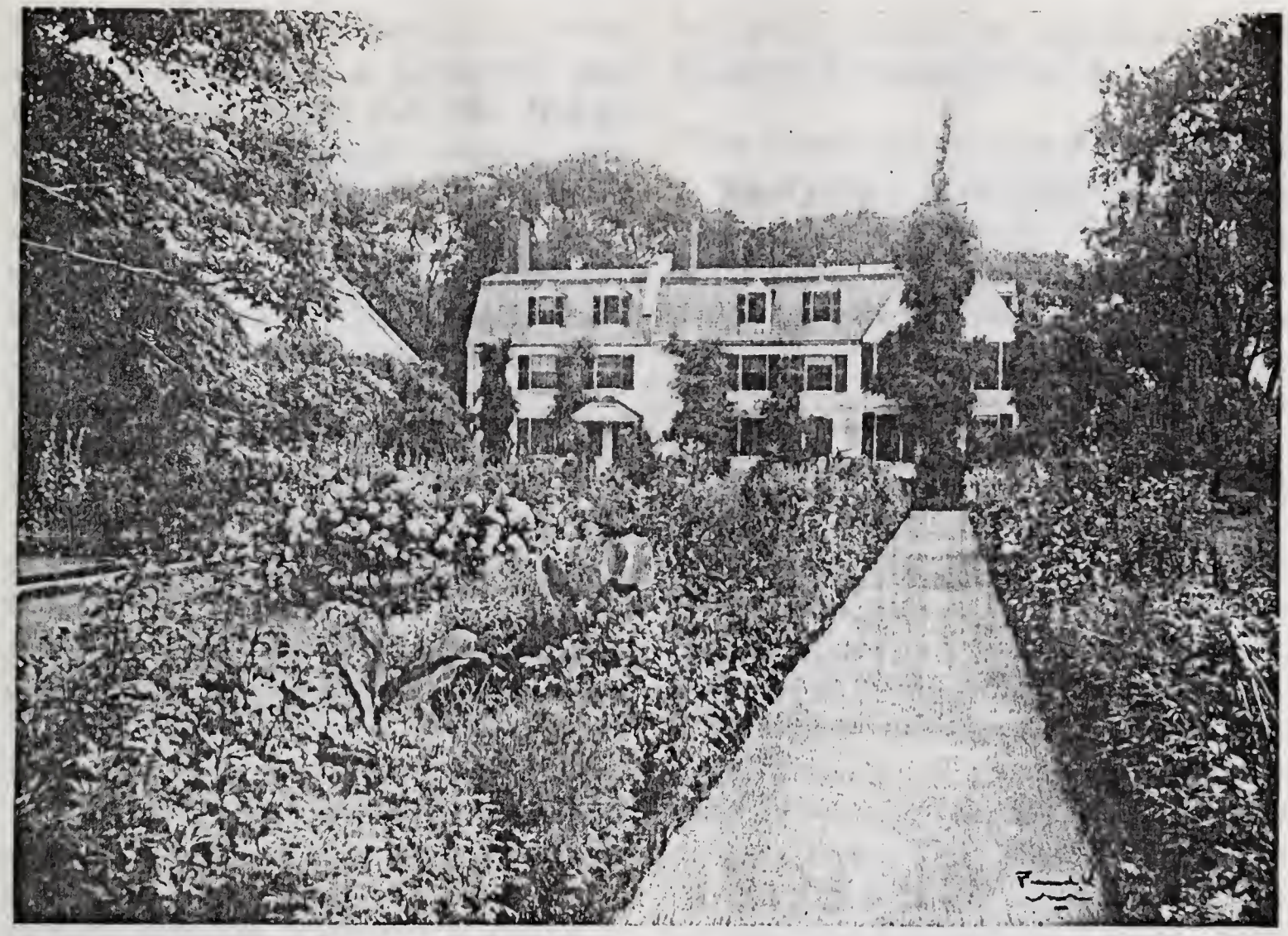


The Stone Library, built in 1870

"HIGH WALLS OF BOOKS IN TIERS FROM FLOOR TO CEILING." THE DESK IN CONGRESS AT WHICH JOHN QUINCY ADAMS FELL IS AT THE RIGHT. THE PORTRAIT ON THE GALLERY IS ONE OF JOHN ADAMS PAINTED BY W. WINSTANLEY IN 1798

attachment to it and the whole region round is stronger than I ever felt it before. . . .

"Quincy, July 21, 1826: Dr. Holbrook, who, as a physician, attended my father, gave me some particulars of his last days. He had retained his faculties till life itself failed. On Saturday, the 1st of the month, he rode down to Mr. Quincy's, and after his return dined below. On Sunday he was much distressed by his cough, but neither then nor Monday kept his bed. My brother that day went to Boston. Mrs. Susanna Boylston Clark, my brother Charles's daughter, on Monday asked my father whether she should write to me. He said at first. 'No! Why trouble my son?' But after a momentary pause said, 'Yes, write to him.' She wrote accordingly. In the night of Monday he suffered much. On Tuesday morning an express was sent to my son George, who was in Boston attending on the celebration of the day. He came out immediately; was here between noon and one. He was recognized by my father, who made an effort to speak to him without success. George received his expiring breath between five and six in the afternoon. He had in the morning been removed from



A walk in the flower garden in 1929

one bed to another, and then back. Mrs. Clark said to him that it was the 4th of July, the fiftieth anniversary of independence. He answered, 'It is a great day. It is a good day.' About one, afternoon, he said, 'Thomas Jefferson survives.'* But the last word was indistinctly and imperfectly uttered. He spoke no more."

It is not known upon which bed or in which room John Adams actually breathed his last. The tradition is, that to make him more comfortable and enable him to lie down when tired arrangements had been made in the Study, the coolest room in the house on that summer day in July.

*Thomas Jefferson also died on July 4th, 1826. He died before John Adams.

After the stone library was built the Study was used as a bedroom for many years. Brooks Adams restored it as a study, replacing in it the old furniture it formerly had in the time of the two Presidents.

The Stone Library

This structure of Quincy granite, standing in the garden apart from the house, was built in 1870 by Charles Francis Adams, just before he left for the Arbitration Convention at Geneva. The Old House had no room for John Quincy Adams's library, which was increased by his own, nor any quiet place for him to read and write. The many books had been kept wherever space could be found—some in the Study, some

in various rooms, but most in a room called the Office in a farmhouse that stood directly behind the Old House. Charles Francis Adams removed this farmhouse when he lengthened the kitchen ell in 1869. Charles Francis Adams is the only one associated with the Library, but he was often seen sitting here reading on quiet summer days, surrounded by the high walls of books in tiers from floor to ceiling. On these shelves are all the literary productions of the family.

Besides these books the Library has other objects of interest. Upon the roof is a gilded weather-vane with the date 1666 cut in the vane. This weather-vane came from the second meeting-house of Braintree, built in 1666, abandoned in 1732, and torn down some years later. The weather-vane was given to John Adams, who set it on a mast in a field across the street where he could see it from his bedroom window—as shown in the sketch made by Sarah Apthorp in 1822 reproduced in this book. On March 23, 1849, Charles Francis Adams recorded in his diary that the mast had been blown down in the night. He saved the vane and when he built the Library placed it on the roof.

In a glass case, among others, are the following family relics: John Adams's law diary; two horse pistols picked up on the field of Waterloo and given to John Quincy Adams who at the time was Minister to England; Lieutenant Joseph Harrod Adams's naval dress-hat, sword, pistols and daguerreotype; a miniature of Louisa Catherine Adams painted the year she was married; buttons from John Adams's coat; and a telescope John Quincy Adams gave to his son Charles Francis. In a corner of the Library there is, what the family will never part with, the desk at which John Quincy Adams fell when stricken on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The Garden and the Front Lawn

The Garden, in the angle between the Old House and Library, was laid out in the time of the Vassalls, and looks today much as it did then. Abigail Adams often mentions it in her letters, and the Yorkist rose bush she brought home in 1788 still lives, and blooms profusely every year. She planted it under the Long Room windows, but, because it was dying, Brooks Adams moved it into the Garden and gave it special care. It soon recovered, and now another bush sprung from one of its shoots is growing near by.

Adjoining the Garden, between the South Portico and the road, is a small front lawn, once shaded by big horse-chestnut trees. The Lawn and Portico also have their family associations. From the gates two flag-stone walks lead across the Lawn to the house—that on the east to the part John Adams built in 1800; the other, to the original house as it was when John Adams bought it. It was along the east walk that Henry Adams was led off to school by his grandfather. Along the other, Abigail Adams passed when she first saw her new home on that June day in 1788. The tradition is, that when Abigail Adams returned to this country she was driven in a chaise to see the house being got ready for her. In former years she had often looked at the house when driving to Boston from her cottage at the foot of Penn's Hill, and, being on intimate terms with the Borlands, knew it well. Compared to her dwelling she had always thought the house large and fine—but now, after the courts of Europe, it seemed so small and cramped that when she stepped from the chaise and had a good look at the house

The South Portico

she sank down on the door-step and shed tears of disillusionment. This tradition is partly supported by one of her letters. On July 7th in a letter to her daughter telling her of their safe arrival and asking her to visit them in their new home, she said of it:

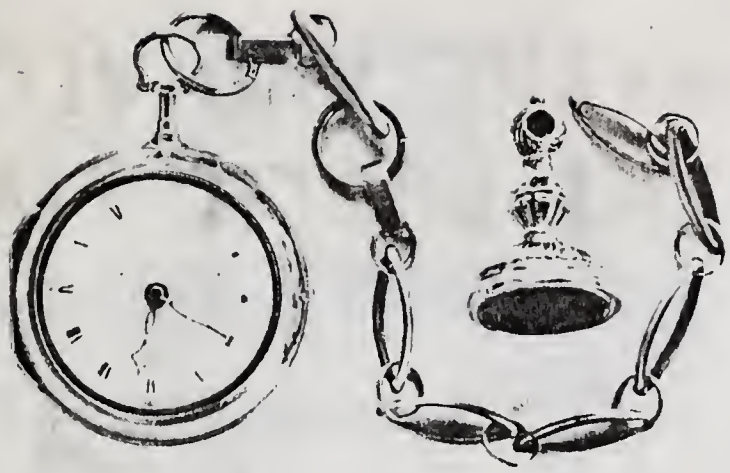
"But we have come into a house but half repaired, and I own myself sadly disappointed. In height and breadth it feels like a wren's house. . . . I hope soon to embrace you, my dear children, in Braintree; But be sure you wear no feathers, and let Colonel Smith come without heels to his shoes, or he will not be able to walk upright."

Standing on the South Portico, John Adams, in 1821, made his last public address. The Cadets of West Point had marched, two hundred strong, to Boston; been received with much honor; presented with standards; and taken to visit Harvard College and Bunker Hill. On August 14th they marched out to Quincy to greet John Adams. After parading past the house and going through evolutions in the field opposite, they stacked arms and gathered on the Lawn in front of the Portico to hear John Adams's address. As he was eighty-six years old his children feared that the strain might be more than he could bear, but his voice got stronger as he went on and he really seemed to enjoy seeing so many young men about him. After the address the Cadets had lunch, and then

flung themselves on the grass to rest in the shade of the horse-chestnut trees, many falling asleep. A detailed account of this and other visits to John Adams can be found in "Figures of the Past." Three years later, on August 29th, 1824, General Lafayette, standing on this Portico, received the people of Quincy, but by that time John Adams had become too feeble to take part.

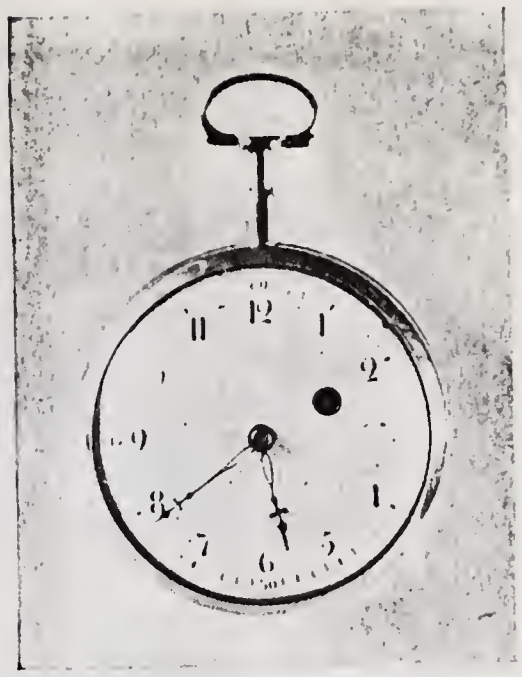
In front of the west door, which still bears John Adams's brass knocker, are flag-stones set in the wooden piazza. These Brooks Adams discovered, half buried in the ground beneath, and reset that they might again be in use as in the time of the Vassalls. The rest of the Portico is unchanged, but the chestnut trees that stood along the wall and by the gates when John Adams was alive have long since died and been removed although well remembered still.

Before he died Brooks Adams often expressed the hope that somehow after his death the Old House would be kept on as he had kept it. Many plans were suggested, but it was his known desire that it should never leave the family that caused those who came after him to make it a memorial.



John Quincy Adams's gold watch chain and seal

MADE BY LESLIE, OF LONDON. CASE MADE IN 1777
NOW OWNED BY A DESCENDANT

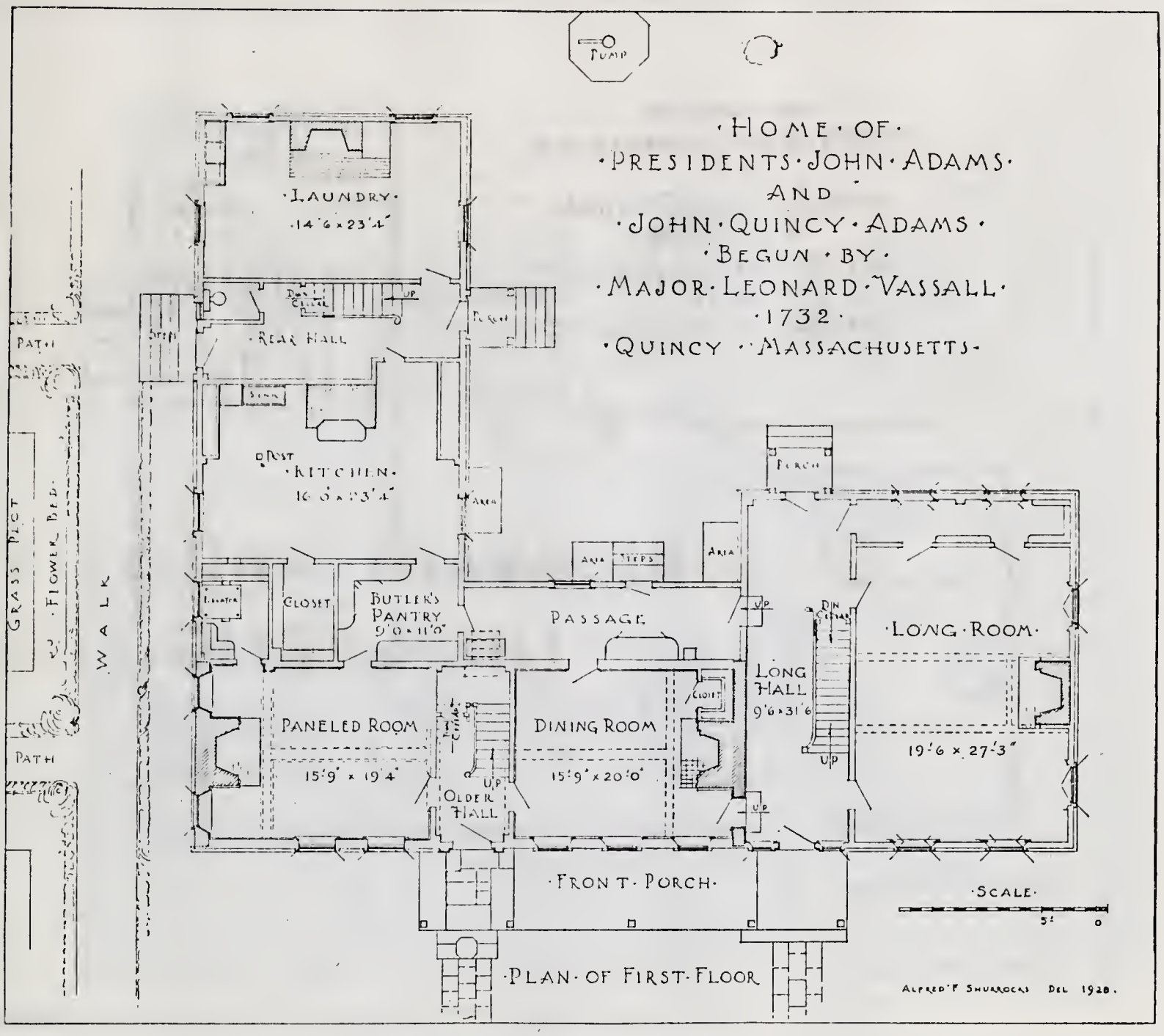


John Adams's gold watch

PROBABLY BOUGHT IN PARIS
IN 1778-1779
NOW OWNED BY A DESCENDANT

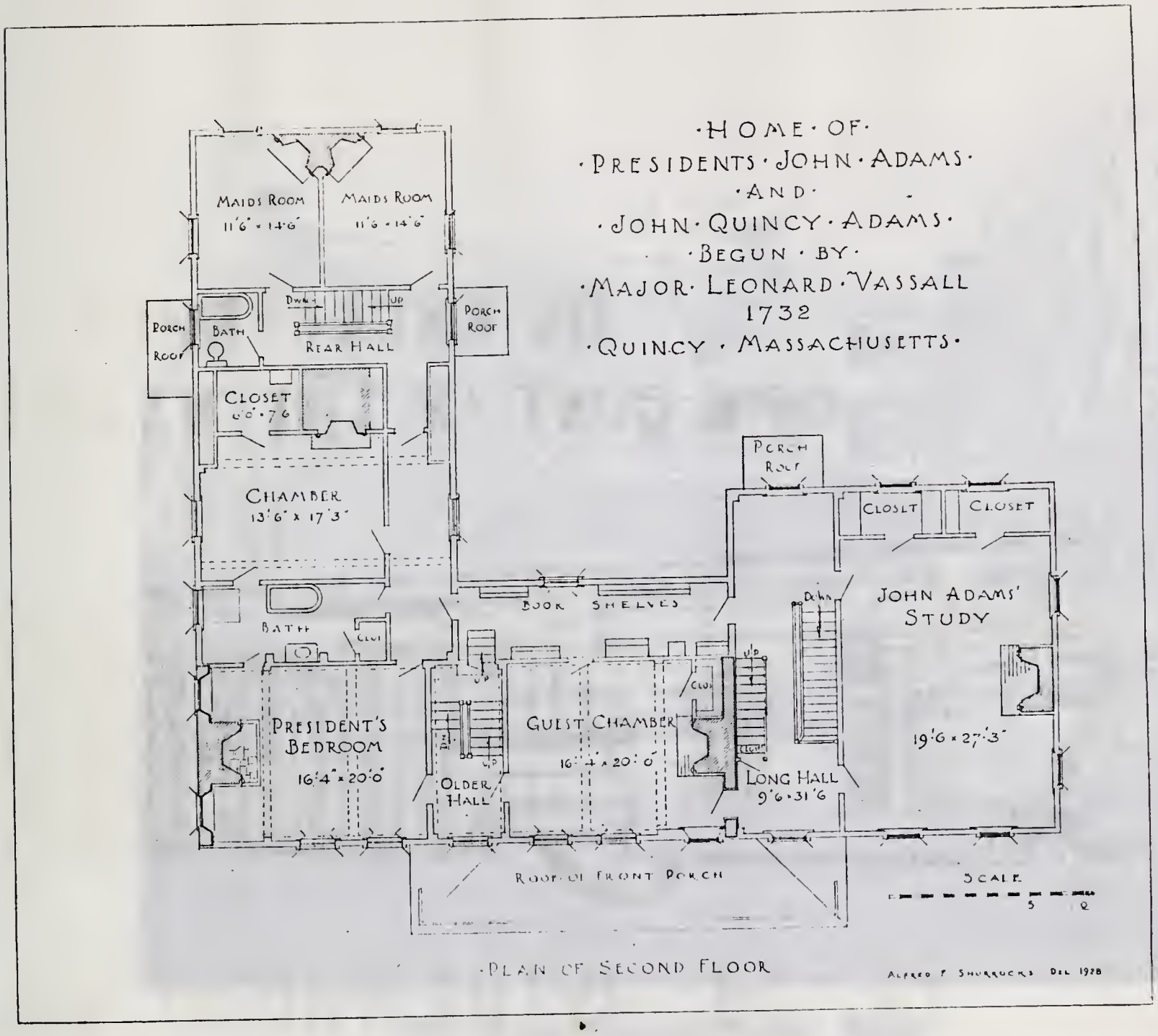
Mrs. John Quincy Adams's "heavy silver teapot, sugar bowl and cream jug"

MENTIONED IN THE "EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS," NOW OWNED BY A DESCENDANT



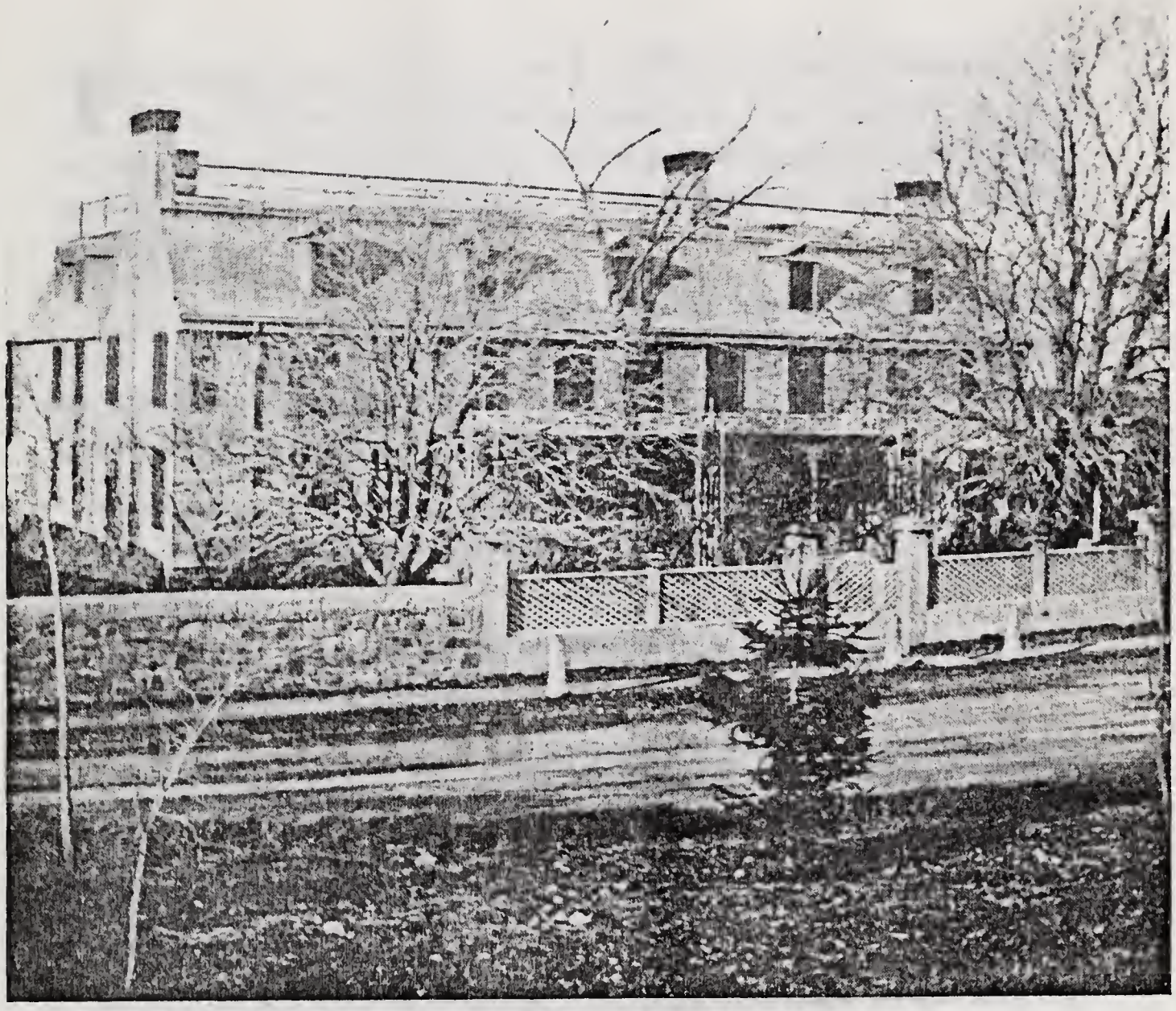
The Adams Mansion

PLAN OF THE FIRST FLOOR



The Adams Mansion

PLAN OF THE SECOND FLOOR



The Adams Mansion, Quincy, Mass.

FROM A STEREOGRAPH MADE ABOUT 1870, IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES

The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, in whose Bulletin this article first appeared, was organized in 1910 for the purpose of preserving for future generations the rapidly disappearing architectural monuments of New England and the antiquities connected with its people.

It owns and maintains twenty-seven houses built between 1648 and 1810 and located in various parts of New England; the "Quincy Memorial," Litchfield, Conn.; and the reversion of a house built in 1702; a grist mill; and two private burying grounds.

It maintains a Historical Museum and Library at its Headquarters in the Harrison Gray Otis House (built 1795), 141 Cambridge Street, Boston.

Its endowment funds and real estate (in January, 1935) represent investments of $607,719.94.

It publishes Old-Time New England, a quarterly illustrated magazine devoted to the ancient buildings, household furnishings, domestic arts, manners and customs and minor antiquities of the New England people. Subscription to this magazine is included in the annual membership fee.

Membership: Life ($60); active ($6); associate ($3) may not vote nor hold office.

Information about any object of historical interest will be gladly received or given. Address letters, or checks if membership is desired, to Carleton R. Richmond, Treasurer, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, Mass.

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